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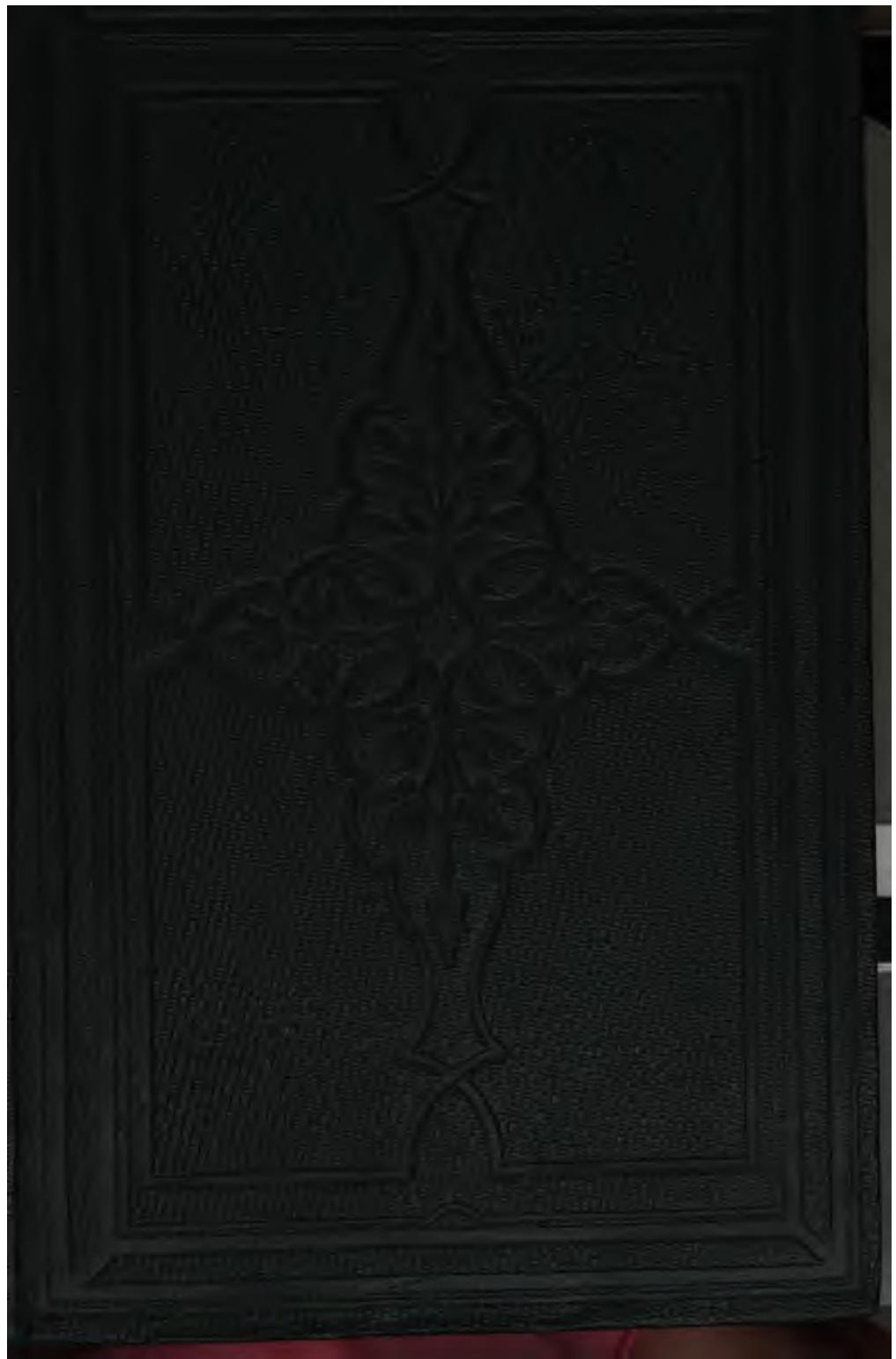
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IN AND AROUND S T A M B O U L.

BY

MRS. EDMUND HORNBY.

"The European with the Asian shore
Sprinkled with palaces : the ocean-stream,
Here and there studded with a seventy-four ;
Sophia's cupola with golden gleam ;
The cypress groves ; Olympus high and hoar ;
The twelve isles, and more than I could dream,
Far less describe, present the very view
Which charmed the charming Mary Montagu."

BYRON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME II.

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CONTENTS.

LETTER I.

	Page
The Franks.—Arrival of Spring.—Ladies' Dresses.—Changeable Climate.—Omar Pasha and the Relief of Kars.—Knavery of the Pashas.—The Greek Easter.—Festival-days at Constantinople.—Change for a Sovereign.—A Lonely House.—A Storm	1

LETTER II.

Wintry Weather.—News of the Peace.—The Rejoicings.—A Visitor from the Crimea.—Crimean Amusements.—Letters from Home	12
---	----

LETTER III.

Excursion to Princes' Islands.—Scenery of the Bosphorus.—Prinkipo.—Visit to a Convent.—The Ancient Chapel.—Curiosities.—Carvings and Pictures.—Beauty of the Island.—Return in the Dark.—A Night on Board	17
---	----

LETTER IV.

Shores of the Bosphorus.—Tomb of Barbarossa.—Antiquities.—Dress.—“Apple-Blossom.”—Sympathy in Misfortune.—Schooling.—Greek Names	27
--	----

LETTER V.

	Page
Tea-Party.—Visit of a Turkish Gentleman.—Morals in Turkey. —Pashas.—The Sultan.—Fashion of learning Music.—Troubles of a Music-Master in the Harem.—Flowers.—Jasmine-sticks.—Pipes.—A Village burnt	34

LETTER VI.

Excursion to the Crimea.—Wild Dogs.—Fleas.—Invasion of Rats and Mice.—Encounter with a Spider.—Gardening	45
--	----

LETTER VII.

Return from the Crimea.—Commencement of the Fast of Ramazan.—Protestant Church.—Return of the Army.—The Peace	53
---	----

LETTER VIII.

Start for the Crimea.—The Bosphorus.—A Swell on the Black Sea.—Pleasures of the Voyage.—Harbour of Balaklava.—Changes accomplished	56
--	----

LETTER IX.

Landing at Balaklava.—Colonel Hardinge.—Russian Governor's House.—A Prisoner of War.—Heights of Balaklava.—Miss Nightingale's Hospital.—“The Sisters.”—Flowers.—Souvenir of the Governor	64
--	----

LETTER X.

Balaklava.—The Camp.—The Battle-field.—Visit to the Malakoff and the Redan.—Botanizing.—Baidar.—Return from the Crimea	73
--	----

CONTENTS.

v

LETTER XI.

	Page
Visit to a Turkish Harem.—The Garden.—The Children.— Scenes in the Garden	87

LETTER XII.

Fast of Ramazan.—Turkish Nationality.—The Sheik-Zadi.— End of the Fast. — Preparations. — Illumination of the Mosques.—Kara-Göz, the Turkish ‘Punoh.’—Firemen . . .	97
---	----

LETTER XIII.

Celebration of the Queen’s Birth-day.—The <i>Fête-Dieu</i> .—Illumi- nations.—‘The Night of Destiny.’—The Sultan’s Visit to the Mosque of Tophana.—Night of Prayer.—Prince Murad . . .	108
--	-----

LETTER XIV.

A Sail on the Bosphorus.—The ‘Belle Poule’—Strawberry-gar- dens.—Last Day of Ramazan	116
---	-----

LETTER XV.

End of Ramazan.—Illuminations.—Night.—Palaces on the Bos- phorus.—Feast of Bairam.—Torchlight Procession of the Sultan.—Ceremony in the Mosque of Tophana	120
---	-----

LETTER XVI.

A Stroll.—The Bosphorus.—Turkish Arsenal.—Suburbs of Con- stantinople.—Poverty in the East.—Kiosks.—Storks.—Turk- ish and Greek Dresses.—Scenes on the River.—The Sweet Waters.—Scenes on Shore.—The Sultan’s Kiosk.—The Sul- tana and her Daughter.—Evening Scene.—Return from the Sweet Waters	126
---	-----

LETTER XVII.

	Page
Thunderstorm.—Return of Troops.—The Commission	150

LETTER XVIII.

Education of Turkish Women.—Rearing of Children.—Want of Instruction.—Books.—Thoughts of Home.—The Climate.—Relics from the Crimea	154
--	-----

LETTER XIX.

The Princes' Islands.—The 'Edith Belina.'—Signor Giacomo.—Church on the Island	162
--	-----

LETTER XX.

The Sultan's Banquet.—Turkish Artificers.—Thunder-Storm.—Long Days.—Vassili's Misbehaviour.—Domestic Changes	167
--	-----

LETTER XXI.

Order of the Medjidi.—The Sultan's Dinner-Party.—The Palace.—Thunderstorm.—"Commissary Joe."—Visitors from the Crimea	171
---	-----

LETTER XXII.

Convent of Jesu Christo.—Fishing Excursion.—Bathing-house.—Early Rising.—Island of Halki	180
--	-----

LETTER XXIII.

Erection of a Church in Prinkipo.—Monastery of Halki.—Greek Churches.—A Greek Wedding.—Bishops.—The Patriarch.—Avenue of Cypress illuminated.—Return home	187
---	-----

LETTER XXIV.

	Page
Excursion to Ismid.—Mountain Scenery.—Islands.—Fishing-Villages.—Rambles on Shore.—Vegetation.—Island Scenery.—Insects and Fishes.—Return to Prinkipo	204

LETTER XXV.

Therapia.—Greek Village.—Roman Reservoirs.—Service on board Ship	224
--	-----

LETTER XXVI.

Climate and Scenery.—Paradise of the Greeks.—Boating Excursions.—The Monastery of St. George.—The Old Gardener.—His Summer Residence.—‘The Magyar.’—American and Greek Ladies.—Greek Homage to Beauty.—Burning a Caique.—Fishing by Night	227
---	-----

LETTER XXVII.

Excursion to Maltape.—Greek Women and Turkish Cafanée.—Marble Fountain.—An Ancient Tree.—The Mosque.—The Imaum.—Village School.—Turkish Women.—Curious Lamp .	242
---	-----

LETTER XXVIII.

Old Churches and Monasteries.—Ancient Manuscript.—Tomb of St. George.—A Picture of St. George and the Dragon.—Donkey Processions.—A Greek Beauty.—The Superior of the Monastery.—Curious Paintings.—A Legend.—Lunatics.—Tree-frogs	253
--	-----

LETTER XXIX.

The Lunatic and the Priest’s Donkey.—Appeal to St. Demetrius.—The Lunatic sent home	271
---	-----

LETTER XXX.

- Visit from a Turkish Lady.—Her Taste for Music.—Her Nubian Slave.—Exhibition of an English Gentleman.—Gratification afforded by the Spectacle 274

LETTER XXXI.

- Boatmen's Songs.—Greek Singing.—Specimens 279

LETTER XXXII.

- Severity of Winter.—Life in a Kiosk.—The Golden Horn frozen over.—Wolves and Foxes.—Their Murderous Incursions.—Scarcity of Food and Fuel.—High Prices.—English and Greek Servants.—Death of Redshid Pasha 287

IN AND AROUND S T A M B O U L.

LETTER I.

THE FRANKS.—ARRIVAL OF SPRING.—LADIES' DRESSES.—CHANGEABLE CLIMATE.—OMAR PASHA AND THE RELIEF OF KARS.—
↳ KNAVERY OF THE PASHAS.—THE GREEK EASTEE.—FESTIVAL-DAYS AT CONSTANTINOPLE.—CHANGE FOR A SOVEREIGN.—A LONELY HOUSE.—A STORM.

Orta-kioy, March 28th, 1856.

My dear Mr. Hornby,
I AM afraid that, although I forward my usual note, it will not leave Constantinople tomorrow. The weather has been so stormy at sea that much confusion is made in the arrival and departure of the mails. Tuesday's steamer has not yet arrived. We heard, yesterday, that she had broken her screw, and put in to the port of Syra, but do not know if it be true or not. The Frank population here amuse themselves by spreading false reports upon every possible subject.

Nothing is too serious to escape them. Any one expecting husband, mother, wife, or child, is considered but a fitter subject for their merciful "wit." I do not wonder at the Turk's horror of a Frank. I said the other day to Kâni Pasha, that I trusted the Sultan did not class the English people amongst such riffraff, for that we should be ashamed to own them. They are often saying at Pera, that such and such a ship is lost with all on board, merely to frighten those who are expecting friends or relations by it.

I told you in my letter of Sunday that all the snow had disappeared. On Monday the south wind set in, and we had a most delicious day, just like the middle of May in England. We went to the harem of Risa Pasha, and nothing could equal the sunny beauty of the Bosphorus. Yesterday was also a lovely day, the sea blue and sparkling, and the villages glittering in the sunshine. It was so clear that I could plainly see the ruins of an old castle far back on the Asian side. Fuad and I sunned ourselves in the garden with the Armenian girls. I gathered a bunch of violets and primroses, to remind me of England; and Master Fuad, always full of mischief, hunted the cats and butterflies, sunning themselves on the borders. Turkish ladies, in their telikis, passed by, paying visits, I suppose. Three of them alighted by our gate to walk up the hill and escape the shaking of their crazy vehicles.

I could not help noticing the brilliancy of their dresses, even here. One of them wore a blue feridjee, bordered with broad, cherry-coloured velvet; another, an amber-coloured feridjee, shot with white; the third, an exquisite violet, edged with black velvet. These best feridjees are made of the richest shot poplin, so you may fancy how beautiful the splendid colours are on a sunny day. The commoner feridjees are made of a kind of merino. Being such a lovely day, I saw a good many Turkish ladies yesterday passing by our road, with their armed Blacks to "guard them."

The Bosphorus looked most lovely, and such a fresh, mild breeze was blowing that I almost wished Edith was here; it seemed impossible for anything to be more pleasant and healthy. A fine English man-of-war came up, with all her sails set. She was going slowly towards the Black Sea, perhaps to the Crimea. It was a beautiful sight. A brig has also anchored just off our little pier. She has the most musical bell on board. It sounds wonderfully sweet, in the night, to hear an English ship's bell ringing out the half-hours, and the "All's well," and to know that they are so near us. I dare say they little think that English are so near *them*.

We are in the Turkish quarter, and from the Bosphorus it looks one cloister of latticed Turkish houses. Yesterday it was so much summer that a party of

"Âmes damnées" were flying up and down, and the Bosphorus was covered with caïques. Most provokingly the wind changed in the night. The increased cold woke me, and I put my tiger-cat on the bed, quite shivering. This morning it is winter again, —a bitter wind whistling down from the north, and a blinding sleet terrifying man and beast. My poor friend, the shepherd, has to bring all his shivering lambs down from the mountains, where they were skipping in sunshine yesterday.

This is indeed a trying climate. I am glad to say that Edmund has not to return tonight, as he dines with Lord Stratford, to talk over some matters connected with the Loan Commission, and will sleep there. Lord Stratford is very much depressed about the affair of Kars: all the blame seems to be put on his shoulders, as all the disasters of the war were upon Lord Raglan's. Poor Lord Raglan broke his heart (they all say here), and, after he was dead, the papers made him a hero, and spoke of his "devotion to his army," etc. I dare say he was not faultless; but everything relating to military matters seems to be in such confusion, that the wonder is that we have not more signally failed than we have.

About Kars I am enabled to tell you, from certain information, that Omar Pasha's visit to the Crimea, many months ago, was for the express, though unde-

clared, purpose, of entreating assistance for General Williams of both the English and French Commanders-in-chief. It now seems that for two or three months before the taking of Sebastopol, both Pélissier and General Simpson were in a state of more than little anxiety as to the issue of the siege. At one time they really began to think that the English and French army ran a good chance of being driven into the sea. Afterwards, the great inferiority, instead of superiority, of the Russians came out. But just at this moment of panic and anxiety, Omar Pasha entreated help for the relief of Kars both of the English and French Generals. He told them that his men were dispirited, in deadly fear of the Russians, and that, unaided, he could never get them up to face the enemy. But he said, "Give me only a couple of regiments of English, and as many French, and I will undertake success. Alone, and with my raw recruits, who have never been under fire, I repeat, I can do nothing." However, so dispiriting and anxious was the state of things before Sebastopol, that neither of the Generals in command would consent to part with a single regiment, not knowing what might happen from minute to minute. You may depend upon this being true.

French, English, Turks, all seem to have blundered. The other day, coming down in the steam-

boat, we noticed a Pasha's caique; "Ah, these Pashas!" said a Turkish soldier, standing by, to Mr. Wilkin. "Why, what's the matter with the Pashas?" said Mr. Wilkin (who speaks Turkish perfectly), "What harm do the Pashas do you?" "You would not ask if you had been at Kars, as I have," said the man. "When the English General prevented their stealing our money, they began to steal our rations; and we should soon have been starved, only the General found it out, and saw each division fed, with his own eyes, every day." This poor fellow had been sent home sick, before the capitulation, but described the misery and starvation as very dreadful. What the Turkish soldier will bear without a murmur, is something almost incredible. Even here, at Constantinople, it makes your heart ache to look at such unhappy, dispirited creatures, shivering in canvas coats (cloth ones being paid for), and with swords by their sides so paltry and worthless that, as they know, they would probably bend or break with the first blow. If a poor Turkish soldier gets thirty piastres of his pay (about five shillings) he is wild with joy, when perhaps a whole year is owing to him, of which he is too ignorant to keep an account, and would not get it if he were otherwise.

The very worst of the Pashas seem to have been concerned in the affairs of Kars. One of them must

have been bad indeed, having been disgraced and sent back to Constantinople, in the outset, for robbing his unfortunate soldiers. The general topic of conversation here is, of course, "Peace or War." Peace, however, from the tenor of the latest telegraphs, seems to be generally expected ; although, when looking on the Bosphorus and Sea of Marmora, the great war-ships of England and France, with gunboats here, and formidable frigates there, give much more the idea of giants resting to renew the strife.

Mrs. Mysseri, who, as I told you, is great in politics, is deeply concerned for England's glory. "To think," she exclaimed, in a burst of indignation, "that we should be made to leave off, just as we are prepared to do so much, and when we know everything, just because those French have got nothing to go on with ! And to think, that they 've got all the glory, and we 've done nothing, but sacrifice thousands of men and millions of money, and made fools of ourselves into the bargain !" This is Mrs. Mysseri's notion of the Peace.

Monday was the first day of the Roman Catholic Greek Easter ; so they had brought Mrs. Mysseri beautiful branches of hyacinths, jonquils, and other spring flowers. I bought a lovely bunch at Stamboul, in a pretty Turkish shop, where the baskets of fruit

and flowers were all trimmed with myrtle and laurel leaves, and tomatoes, after the usual pretty fashion. The streets were crowded with Greeks in gala dress. The general Greek Easter does not commence for some time. It is now the Lent of the Protestant population, and a strict fast. I see crowds going to and from church twice a day, even to the caiquejees and porters. The old watchman chants what the services of the day will be, in the street, opposite the different Greek houses. The different days here are quite perplexing. First comes our Christmas-day, and all the English ships dressed with flags ; then the Greek Christmas ; then the Armenian Christmas. Then the three different New Year's Days ; then the Jewish Passover ; then Mahomet's birthday, and all the minarets glistening with lamps. On Fridays you hear the cannon thundering that the Sultan has gone to mosque : it is the Mohamedan Sunday, and the Turks shut up their shops and walk out, carrying their little children. In the evening the miserable cottages of the Jews here are adorned with lamps, hung out in expectation of their hoped-for Messiah. The valley quite twinkles with them, as there are many Jews at Orta-kioy, and thus you may count the different families on a dark Friday evening. Saturday is their Sabbath, as you know, and as a Jew is our fishmonger, we never get fish on that day.

Then comes our Sunday, but we have no sweet-sounding church-bells. There is a service kindly read by the chaplain of the 'Queen,' in a small room of a house on the other hill of Orta-kioy, but I have never been; people talk of almost fainting from heat and closeness, the room being heated with a stove; and this after a long, muddy walk up-hill, seemed to me hardly safe in such a climate. I remember many of the beautiful chants of our Church, and sing them every Sunday morning to the old piano. The poor sick Armenian girl, Oscu, likes to stand in the garden and hear me sing the *Te Deum* when my window is open. She came in, the first morning; but when I made a sign that it was a prayer of our country, she sat down quietly, and did not speak, or rather sing, another word. They are kind, affectionate people, simple and unpretending as little children. But to return to the different days. First the Carnival of the Periotes or Franks, then the Greek Carnival, and then the Armenian; the Roman Catholic Armenians beginning on the day when the Protestants of the Greek Church end, and the Roman Catholic Greeks beginning their Easter before the Protestant brotherhood have half got through Lent. All this, with their different Saints'-days, fast-days, and feast-days, is almost as bewildering as counting your change at Constantinople.

For change for a sovereign you may get a quantity of dirty paper of the value of a few pence, German kreutzers innumerable, an English shilling, and a huge Turkish crown, mixed with francs and paras, to one's utter bewilderment. The Turkish gold coin is miserably thin and bad, quite illustrative of the fallen state of the country. Our English sovereigns look fair and beautiful amongst them. I always say that the English gold so charms Vassili when his wages are paid, that for a moment the exquisite "chink" makes him quite forget the "robbery in Egypt." He was paid yesterday, and happy and gracious for the day.

But I must say good-night. It seems strange to be in this lonely house, alone, with only two Greeks sleeping below. I was rather nervous when we first came here, and Edmund had to stay all night at Therapia. I used to practise how to cock the revolver before going to my room. Now I do not mind it in the least, and little Fund sleeps on my feet, and the revolver reposes quietly on the chair. It would be a stout Greek indeed to brave such a trio. Poor Antonio, the dumb Armenian, has been in to see me, and brought me a pretty chaplet of beads for Edith.

George the Nair has had his discharge today for bad conduct, and was greatly enraged; so I am more than usually bolted up. The wind is howling dread-

fully. These places on the Bosphorus are more like summer-houses than anything else, and shake with every gust. Heaven help the poor people in the Black Sea tonight! This morning a steamer was towing in the hull of an unfortunate vessel,—masts, ropes, all swept away. We often see this after a stormy night.

The bell of the English vessel sounds so pleasantly! I often wonder who they are on board, and from what part of England they come.

A great many ships are lying just here, I suppose for safety. Their lights look very pretty, twinkling beyond the profound darkness of the valley. Again, good-night! Fuad is sitting up, begging to go to bed. He begs for everything. Love to all! Dear Edith's doll will soon be ready, charmingly dressed *à la Sultana*.

LETTER II.

WINTRY WEATHEE.—NEWS OF THE PEACE.—THE REJOICINGS.—A VISITOR FROM THE CRIMEA.—CRIMEAN AMUSEMENTS.—LETTERS FROM HOME.

Orta-kioy, March 30th.

My dear Sister,

IT is about as bad a day as it is possible to imagine,—a north wind, and sleet falling fast and thick. I have just started Edmund, who has to brave it all, although not at all strong yet. He still has too much responsible and perplexing work to do, and is too anxious about all. He is now sitting on a Commission with General Mansfield and the Turkish Minister of War (Seraskier). How thankful I shall be when we are quiet at home again!

In the midst of the noise of the wind and rain, the rattling of our numerous windows, and all the dreary sounds of a regular winter's day, the thunder of cannon sounded from the different ships at anchor this morning. At first we thought they were sa-

luting the Sultan on his way to Scutari to review the troops, notwithstanding the badness of the weather ; but soon after, while Henry and I were wondering, in came Antonio, the dumb Armenian, who wrote in Italian to me : “The Emperor of Russia is at peace with the Emperor of Turkey.” Presently the village watchmen went through the streets, striking their staves on the ground as they do at night, and chanting the news of “Peace.” I was sorry not to understand what the funny old fellows said. They finished by asking for a few piastres from each house, as a subscription towards lighting up the Greek churches. In the evening all the ships were illuminated, as well as a short notice would admit, and lamps were hung out at the gates of the palaces by the side of the Bosphorus. Muskets were let off at different times all the evening, and every now and then a few rockets thrown up. We could plainly see the rejoicing lights of Kulalee on the Asian side. It was too piercingly cold to venture out. The Armenian Bishop, our opposite neighbour, hung out a fine large lantern, containing three or four candles. I possessed only one pretty little one, which I had bought for Edie, and was not sufficiently patriotic to hang it out. I asked Vassili if he had a paper one in the kitchen, but he grumbled out something about their being “too dear to play the fool with;” so our establish-

ment was not distinguished for the brilliancy of its rejoicings. I heard that Pera was very prettily illuminated last night. The Ministers went to congratulate the Sultan yesterday. We heard the Sultan's band playing in the evening. I suppose his Majesty was in good spirits.

1st of April.

We were surprised at breakfast-time by a muddy traveller dashing in. This was our Therapian friend, Richard Coote, of the 46th. You will remember my telling you of him, and his dog "Boxer," who was killed by trying to save his master from a shell, in the trenches before Sebastopol. We used to have very pleasant walks together at Therapia, and parted with regret. He is now on his way to England, in the wildest spirits, and as strong as a giant. He was as glad to see us, and as rough and noisy, as a young Newfoundland dog. We could hardly understand him, for Crimean slang has become almost a language of itself. He says they have had "a jolly time of it, this winter,"—steeple-chases, theatres, and all sorts of fun. Pelting the Russians on the North side, he said, was no end of a glorious morning's amusement. The English officers throw snowballs, made as hard as possible, with a shilling, sixpence, or half-crown in them. In return comes from the

Russians another, of clay or snow, containing little crosses, old Russian coins, and other curiosities. Coote gave me a little cross, contained in a ball of mud which nearly broke his head. He ran on with all sorts of nonsense and fun, and made me laugh immensely. Such a savage-looking being, coated in mud, I never beheld before.

He dares not show his uniform jacket, having done, as he said, the “slow trick” of saving it, until it was impossible to wear it with the truly Crimean trousers. He had had fine large holes in his boots for weeks, but looked the picture of health and strength and good-humour. At first, he said, he was disappointed at having peace, our army being in such splendid trim ; but now, he added, “I feel thankful and jolly enough, at the thoughts of seeing my dear mother and England again ; and I dare say a good many do besides.” He was off to England by the three o’clock steamer, so I could get nothing ready to send by him.

The review at Scutari is put off, I am happy to say, until finer weather. There is also to be a steeple-chase, at which the Sultan has promised to attend. The wind is so cold that I do not think there is any chance of going to Princes’ Islands tomorrow. Henry went to Pera in a caique yesterday, taking Vassili, and returned with his luggage, which was fortunately found. The letters and newspapers were quite a prize.

As to dear Edie's "picture," we went into fits of laughing about it. I never saw any daguerreotype bad enough to match it before, and that is saying a great deal. Tell her that her Papa was delighted with the stone, and is going to have a ring put into it and wear it on his chain. The little basket I keep my thimble in, and the two little dolls I shall give to a pretty little Turkish child of my acquaintance here, who will be delighted with them. The myrtle-leaves I keep in my books : thank dear little Edie for them all ; I am so glad she does not forget me. The Mail is not yet in, being again two days behind time ; a north wind keeps them back. The sun is bright and the days are fine, but the wind still cold. Edmund is much better today, and, when the weather is warmer, will, I hope, be quite well again. Adieu, my dear Julia !

LETTER III.

EXCURSION TO PRINCES' ISLANDS.—SCENERY OF THE BOSPHORUS.
—PRINKIPO.—VISIT TO A CONVENT.—THE ANCIENT CHAPEL.
—CURIOSITIES.—CARVINGS AND PICTURES.—BEAUTY OF THE
ISLAND.—RETURN IN THE DARK.—A NIGHT ON BOARD.

Orta-kioy, April 7th, 1856.

My dear Mother,

I THINK it very likely that you will receive my two last letters together, as the Mail of Thursday went by the long route, and today's (Monday) is a very quick one.

I have not heard from you since my cousin Henry's arrival. He is, I think, enjoying himself very much, and charmed with the novelty and beauty of the scenery here. On Thursday we went to Princes' Islands, although, from the weather having been so cold and stormy, I hoped the party would have been put off. However, contrary to all expectation, it turned out a lovely morning, with every prospect of its lasting so. Accordingly, at ten o'clock we walked down to the pier, and there was the 'City of Paris' gaily dressed with

flags and pennants, come up from Constantinople to fetch us. I wished you were there, you would have enjoyed it so.

At Tophana we lay to, the harbour being too crowded with shipping to venture very close in-shore. The company arrived in caiques. It was very amusing to watch with our glasses, who was coming. At last all were assembled, and off we started, the band playing merrily. The sea sparkled in the brilliant sunshine. Henry was perfectly enchanted with Stamboul, and its cypresses and minarets rising abruptly out of the water.

Steaming down towards the islands, we had a glorious view of the Golden Horn and Scutari. The largest vessel in the world, an American, was dozing quietly in the sun in the Sea of Marmora, all her sails set. It was the most wonderful sight. We agreed that the extraordinary beauty of the scene is even distressing. In the first place, you never can by any possibility believe it to be real, that you are not dreaming; and secondly, you are half-miserable because everybody you like is not with you. When we came within sight of the mountains, leaving behind us the Golden Horn, with its great Roman wall and turrets still guarding the shore, I assure you it was quite overpowering. The sea heaved, and glittered like silver, beneath mountains, in some places

higher than the clouds, dazzling with snow and ice on their summits, and clothed with dark fir-trees and heather below, just like St. George's Hills. Halfway up one of the highest peaks, stand boldly out the ruins of a monastery. On the principal island, cottages, vineyards, and olive-gardens peep out here and there; but several of them are mere masses of rock, uninhabited, except by sea-birds, and looking savage and desolate enough. Our vessel stopped at the rough quay of the principal island, called, I believe, Prinkipo.

A crowd of wild-looking Turks and Greeks, seeing our flags and pennants, came rushing down, and with them about a hundred Russian prisoners, in their long grey coats and fur caps. They looked very well, and happy. We disembarked in this crowd, and all the windows of the little wooden houses on shore were full of curious and laughing faces. Some of the children followed us halfway up the mountain. The valley of the island is beautifully cultivated, principally with vines, olives, and pomegranates. A lovely walk we had, although a very tiring one. After following a winding path sheltered with large fir-trees, for some time, and beginning to feel dreadfully tired, to the delight of the whole of the party we came to a convent, the gates of which were wide open. We entered the courtyard, which was in a most ruinous state, and

quite deserted, except by a solitary white hen, who walked up to us in a very confident manner, looking sleek and well fed. All round the courtyard was a kind of open gallery, with benches, and beyond that, the doors of the monks' apartments, in which the giddy young ladies of our party were running about without ceremony. Presently a middle-aged Greek appeared, and looked surprised at seeing so large a party within those desolate and dilapidated old walls. Mr. Leigh speaks Greek ; so we asked leave to rest, which was most kindly granted. The Greek told us that there was but one monk left ; the brotherhood had fallen sadly into decay. He was old, he said, and did not like to be disturbed by strangers ; he was now working in his garden, but we might see the chapel if we pleased. How delighted Julia would have been with the old chapel, built in the early days of Christianity, with its curious pictures of saints, crucifixes, and mouldering priests' vestments, evidently once of extraordinary richness.

Here, in the East, things often are found just as they were a thousand years ago, and it was with great feelings of awe that we touched the old volumes in the quaintly-carved stalls where the priest reads. I put aside dark and heavy hangings, and crept through a little door into the holy recess, as it were, of the chapel. Here hung the antique silver censers, cu-

riously carved crucifixes, and strange pictures of saints and martyrs, with silver hands and "glories." Rich priests' vestments lay in the deep recess of the window, but old and moth-eaten, telling a sad tale of the decay of the Christian church and brotherhood. The light was too dim to see much at a glance, and the old Greek soon came in to tell me, by a grave sign, that I was on forbidden ground, which I did not know; but it was to me the greatest charm to touch lightly those ancient things. I believe an antiquary would have gone wild; and I must say that a charming picture of a saint reading, and a crucifix evidently of extraordinary antiquity, haunt me still. The old Greek gave me a curious little cross, and allowed me to take, from a ruined part of the chapel appropriated to women, a small globe of china, which once hung on one of the ancient lamps, now lying broken on the pavement. It is very curious, and marked with the cross of the Greek Church. I am taking care of it for Mrs. Austin.

We propose going to the islands for a month. I then hope to find a few more of these curious things. One lamp, with all its quaint ornaments, was lying mouldering on the ground in a corner, and several smaller votive ones hanging neglected, and covered with dust, in the ruined part of the chapel I mentioned. Some of them were alabaster, with silver

chains ; some curiously worked in brass. If we go to the islands in May, oh that the monk may take a new crucifix for an old, and "new lamps for old," after the manner of the African magician ! I went into several of the deserted cells. Each Brother seemed to have had a small room to himself, with part of the floor raised at one end of it for a divan. Such an enchanting view from the little casement, of mountains, fir-trees, arbutus, grey rocks, and vine-yards, with the sea glittering on each side ! The fishing-rods and water-jars of the monks still remained outside several of the doors. By one of them still hung a walking-staff and large lantern, which had once been a very handsome one. The doors of the little carved oak cupboards were open, and a few primitive earthenware vessels still stood within, just as the poor old men may have left them years and years ago. Rude carvings of saints' heads, and a few broken Greek characters were notched on the old bench of the open gallery where I sat. The scene had an extraordinary effect on one's mind. In these vast solitudes things seem to stand still. How different to the whirl and constant change of civilized life ! But I shall write you more of these lovely islands and their various monasteries when we are there in May.

M. Musurus is going to ask the Greek Patriarch

to allow us to lodge in another convent higher up the mountain, which is in better repair, and was once the prison of Irene, Empress of the East. In the summer many rich Greeks go there for the benefit of the air ; so, in these modern days, there is a steamer to the principal island night and morning. We are going to have a tent put up on the sands, for sea-bathing, and look forward with great pleasure to the change when the hot weather sets in. How you would enjoy it, and dear Edie ! There would be no fear for her health here ; they say it is the finest climate in the world. The largest island has about a thousand inhabitants.

How delightful to have a farm at Princes' Islands, and rooms at Pera for the three winter months, should we be obliged to remain here ! We could buy half the island, with garden and vineyard, for £500, and build a good comfortable house, with a fireplace, and every comfort. You would "go distracted" if you were to see it. Fancy St. George's heathery Hills rising out of the sea, with shining snowy mountains all around, Asia in the distance, and vineyards and olive-gardens and ruined monasteries in the centre. We left just before sunset ; the mountains were violet-colour, and the sea the darkest blue. I felt very happy, because, in case of our ever living here, it seemed as if there was a beautiful and

healthy home for Edith. We had a delightful passage homeward, but some officers of the party persuaded the captain to go into the Sea of Marmora ; this made us late, and, as it was dark when we arrived at Constantinople, they could not take us up the Bosphorus to Orta-kioy.

Few caïques came up to us, and those were only single-oared ones. What was to be done ? Only two small caïques for all. So it was arranged at last that, to avoid the night air, I was to accept Mr. Leigh's offer of sleeping on board his yacht, the 'Vesta.'

The 'Vesta' was lying off Stamboul. Her master went on board first, just to say, "Ladies coming," to his men, and Madame de Souci and I sat quietly on deck, watching the marvellous effect of the illuminated minarets of Santa Sophia, Sultan Achmetie, and other mosques, on the water, and among the clustering cypresses. It was just like a fairy dream, if even fairies can dream anything so beautiful and unique. I thought at first that it was in honour of "Peace," but Admiral Slade told me that it was a great Mohamedan feast-day, the anniversary of Mahomet's entrance into heaven on a white camel.

At last all our large party got off, crying out many a "good-night" as they stepped down the ship's side into the dancing caïques below. This is extremely dangerous, as you may suppose, unless you are care-

ful, and especially in the dark, with innumerable lights all round, which dazzle and confuse.

We soon reached the 'Vesta,' lying off a forest of masts. It was wonderful to me how the boatmen could find her out, the darkness was so profound, and the lights of the minarets, and the illuminated masts of some of the Turkish men-of-war, so bewildering, glittering high in the air. Every now and then a rocket whizzed up, and burst over our heads. I was not sorry to find ourselves safe in the charming little cabin of the 'Vesta.' The old steward was bustling about, and had already prepared a real English tea, as he called it, which was welcome indeed. A bright fire burned in a tiny English grate, and, like a cat, I settled on the hearth at once, and could have purred with pleasure. The 'Vesta' is a charming little vessel. She was once a Trinity-house yacht, the one in which the Queen went to Scotland. She now belongs to Mr. Leigh, who has invited us to go to Salonica in her. We shall touch at Candia and other beautiful islands: it will be a rare treat.

After thoroughly enjoying tea and ham, and a chat with our kind host, Miss Barker and I retired to our comfortable little cabin. We were amused to hear Mr. Leigh consulting with the old steward about going on shore in the morning, and what was to be got for breakfast, etc. The night

was as calm as possible. Only the watch walking up and down, and the sound of the different ships' bells, told that we were on board ship. I thought, as I was falling asleep, that you little imagined I was out at sea, lying off the Golden Horn in a strange ship. At eight o'clock the good old steward tapped with hot water, but I was already up and dressed. We had a breakfast of delicious red mullet, raimak (a kind of cream), honey from Mount Hymettus, and all the good things which Constantinople could furnish.

We went on shore at ten, and had another long ramble in the cemetery, where there is a magnificent view of the arches of the Roman aqueduct. But I must say good-night, being very tired.

LETTER IV.

SHORES OF THE BOSPHORUS.—TOMB OF BARBAROSSA.—ANTIQUITIES.—DRESS.—“APPLE-BLOSSOM.”—SYMPATHY IN MISFORTUNE—SCHOOLING.—GREEK NAMES.

Orta-kioy, April 12th, 1856.

My dear Sister,

YESTERDAY's Mail brought me your long letter, and the little packet of violets from Edith. There was just one breath of sweetness left, and they were very welcome. How pleasant England must be now! I often think of its hedgerows, and green lanes, and cottage gardens, after the fresh showers—things unknown here. However, we have lovely weather, although rather too warm. The Asian hills opposite are just tinted with the delicate green of spring; there is a breeze from the south, and “white horses,” which I love to watch, are rushing in from the Sea of Marmora. I was in a caïque yesterday, crossing from Scutari; vast numbers of ships, many of which were homeward bound, and crowded with troops from the Crimea, stood out, a fine foreground to the

distant mountains. It was a beautiful sight. The lower range of mountains was clothed in delicate green and the richest tints of brown ; the higher looked like white clouds, but shining with snow and ice, which will soon disappear, except from the loftiest peaks. Even now a gigantic hillock of green bursts out every here and there, like a huge daisy-bud amidst the surrounding snow. It is very tantalizing to be in this part of the world, and not have plenty of both time and money. There are so many places of the greatest interest to visit, that I always look wistfully on the mountains, and lay down my map with a sigh. As it is, I am obliged to content myself with seeing as much of Stamboul as possible, and making little excursions to the different villages, and to the charming nooks and valleys on the Bosphorus. The other day I stumbled over the stones of Beshiktash for two or three hours, wishing much to see the burial-place of the ancient Moslem admiral, Barbarossa. I was told that it was easy to discover the old ivy-covered tomb, not far from the wayside ; but I did not find it so, and returned, with nothing for my morning's walk but a few pretty pieces of common pottery, which I found in a quaint old shop of the village. Vassili bargained for me, with a grim surprise at my caring for such barbarous things. However, I am bound to say that

he shows great interest in my wanderings, and does all he can to help me in every way ; even to the collecting of old coins and crosses, and inquiring after curious ancient pavements, one of which he tells me is to be seen, of great beauty and in a perfect state of preservation, in a monastery at Halki. We think of taking a small house at the Islands when the warm weather sets in fully : I shall then be able to explore, which I always do with a feeling of regret that you are not with me, and thinking of the old places which we have visited together in days gone by.

My life here is certainly a strange one for a woman. My camp-like house gives me but little concern, beyond seeing that it is scrubbed clean ; I can go out in a morning, after having exercised my dogs in the garden and fed my birds, without much caring whether it is burnt down or not. My ornamental wardrobe is at the lowest possible ebb,—my laces nibbled by midnight mice, my collars tattered and torn by the dignified kindness of the Greek lady. So I should not think it worth while even to shut the door of my room ; for the few things I have of value I left in England. Every article of dress is frightfully dear here, especially since the war ; and I carefully hoard my money for potteries, which cost a few piastres, old coins, incense, embroideries, and the many pretty trifles of the Bazaar at Stamboul. So

expect to see me return with a seeming predilection for savage costume; but don't abuse my appearance until you behold the amber beads I have bought for you, and the scarf worked in myrtle-leaves and gold by an ancient Greek dame of Therapia. By the bye, I am trying to learn the embroidery. We have a Greek woman now who knows a little about it, and seems willing to teach me: her name is Melia, which, by Vassili's learned translation, appears to signify "Apple-blossom" in the vulgar tongue. I always call her "Apple-blossom," it so takes my fancy. She is a worthy body, but sour-looking, and slow in all her movements. At first we thought that she was unhappily of the crab-apple species, but it seems, poor thing, that she has only been blighted; for the love of her husband, a Greek, much younger and better-looking than herself, disappeared unaccountably with her poor stock of piastres, and he vanished as unaccountably himself some time after,—no uncommon thing here, I am told, as in other parts of the round world. So, the "Apple-blossom" and Vassili are two misanthropes together: the faithless husband and the robbery in Egypt are great bonds of union, and they work on in silent sympathetic gloom. Yanni, the Sais, is a great contrast, always smiling and gay, in the smartest jacket and sash. They are all three very good in their way,

and certainly most attentive and devoted to us. Apple-blossom’s “only joy” is a spoiled, perverse, and ugly boy of five, whom we allowed her to have with her as a solace to her woes. He killed butterflies, spoiled flowers, stopped up the fountain, let out my birds, half strangled little Fuad, and committed so many enormities, that he became the plague of my life. At last he was caught dipping his fingers into some kaimak, and that sealed his fate. He is now consigned by day to the tender mercies of the Greek schoolmaster of the village, who undertakes to reform his morals and instruct him in the mysteries of his primer, for the sum of thirty piastres, or four-and-fourpence a month; this certainly cannot be considered an extravagant charge, considering that the Apple-blossom says it is a “select” school. But Apple-blossom, through the favour of her patron saint, Demetrius, whom she ever gloomily invokes in all her domestic troubles, is ambitious for her “piccolo,” who certainly already shows slight symptoms of improvement. He formerly entertained a very wholesome but deadly fear of me, the “Cocona;” but we are now becoming good friends, especially since I sat on the garden-steps with him one morning, and begged to be taught a few letters of the poor torn Greek primer, dogs-eared and blistered with many a tear; for Johannichino is given to crying

under difficulties, and does not take kindly to literature and to its representative, the dirty-visaged, dark-bearded Greek dominie. He sometimes consoles himself by bringing his schoolfellows as far as the garden-door. How one is startled at hearing the old Greek names applied to such dirty little urchins, squabbling against dusty walls for marbles, or screaming for piastres at strangers passing by!—“Epaminondas,” “Aristides,” “Aspasia,” “Sappho”! “Aristides” is perhaps, to your great horror, tormenting and killing flies, or slinging stones vigorously across the narrow streets at children smaller than himself, or appropriating the whole of a seedy melon; “Sappho,” sitting in a ravine before the wretched tumble-down wooden cottages, filthily dirty, busily engaged in the unpoetical manufacture of a “dirt-pie,” and utterly regardless of the shrill screams of her slipshod mother. Perhaps Sapphos, in these degenerate days of modern Greece, make dirt-pies even at Lesbos! This was a melancholy thought the other day, when standing at my garden-door, and hearing those names called in the noisy children’s gambols.

But it is getting late. Vassili is opening the garden-door for Johannichino, who, returning from school with satchel slung across his shoulder, looks quite a Greek edition of Shakespear’s Second Age

of Man. There is usually a cord attached to our rude latch, like that to Red Riding-Hood's grandmother's, and Vassili is grumbling at having to go further than the door of his den to answer the tinkle of the rusty bell. Johannichino slips quickly by to his mother, in evident fear of being devoured at least by his amiable colleague.

It is now nearly twilight, and I will conclude my gossip with you, my dear sister, and practise 'Adelaide' on the old pianoforte till dinner-time. A string of camels has just passed by, laden with baskets of charcoal: the tinkle of their bells sounds pleasantly in the distance, as they wind round the steep roads leading to the village. I have been so many hours alone; that I could write the history of the day by its sounds, Christian and Mohammedan. What should I do without my letters to you all, by way of employment? I might take to sighing and dozing by the wayside, like old Fortunata, a Greek woman here; or create myself a female dervish, and practice necromancy and the black art.

LETTER V.

TEA-PARTY.—VISIT OF A TURKISH GENTLEMAN.—MORALS IN TURKEY.—PASHAS.—THE SULTAN.—FASHION OF LEARNING MUSIC.—TROUBLES OF A MUSIC-MASTER IN THE HAREM.—FLOWERS.—JASMINE-STICKS.—PIPES—A VILLAGE BURNT.

Constantinople, April 15th, 1856.

My dear Mother,

We had an amusing tea-party last evening. Antonio, the Armenian, came in, and wrote in Italian that, if perfectly agreeable, his mother and eldest brother desired to pay us a visit; and at the same time begged permission to introduce a Turkish gentleman, a friend of theirs, who was anxious to make our acquaintance. We were of course happy to see them, and Johannichino was instantly despatched with a note to my kind friend Miss Clara Barker, to enable us to have the pleasure of also understanding them.

The good old Armenian lady presented the Turk with her usual dignity and grace. He lives in a large yellow house on the Bosphorus, in the harem

part of which he has one wife, and his brother two. So Dhudu whispered to me on the divan ; for, although of the new school, and affecting European manners, he seemed shy of ladies, and soon crept off to the stove and the gentlemen.

I was going to clap my hands for coffee ; but they said that he was ambitious of making himself acquainted with English customs, and had expressed a hope, before coming in, that he should see an English lady make tea. So I gave him that pleasure, although I must say that the taste, at least, seemed to afford him anything but satisfaction. He was asked to take another cup, and declined with great earnestness. He seemed so wretched without his chibouque, that we agreed to offer him one, even in my little *sanctum*. With very little persuasion, Dhudu skilfully made cigarettes for her mother and self, and bowing, they each took to them kindly. The conversation now became animated, for the Ef-fendi's shyness soon wore off under the friendly shelter of his clouds of smoke.

From questions about England, our army, and Government, he was soon led to speak of Turkey and its affairs. He told us, very bitterly, many things relating to the disgraceful immorality of the Turkish Ministers, sunk in indolence and vice ;— how devoid they almost all are of the slightest

feeling for their unhappy and despised country, the slightest sympathy for its impoverished and ruined state; how they only seek their own interest and aggrandisement,—in fact, all that doubtless you have heard many times before, although not from the lips of one of their own people. There was a certain eloquence about him, or, it might be, that there is something so startling and tragical in the description of a kingdom and people falling to ruin by rapid strides,—so rousing in stories of barbaric cruelty and oppression in these days,—that we all listened with the greatest attention to accounts of poor olive-growers and unfortunate farmers of the provinces, taxed, robbed, and ruined by Pashas revelling in palaces on the Bosphorus, “at this moment perhaps drunken with wine, (as many of them I could name constantly are after sunset) and shut up in their luxurious apartments.”

He went on to talk of the Sultan—“sovereign only in name—wishing to do much—able, from the prejudices, quarrels, and corruptness of his Ministers, to do so little. When, by a fortunate chance, he succeeds with these, some foreign Power steps in, and with mortifying interference puts the whole thing aside. He is deeply in debt, even for the clothes and jewels of his wives, in their morning shoppings at the bazaars,—still more deeply for his favourite fancy of

palace-building ; his health is wretched, thanks to the wicked and unnatural conduct of his mother, who led him into every excess when a mere boy, in order to gain more power of intrigue herself during his minority. Sometimes there is quite a scene at the Palace with the Minister of Finance, about the frightful amount of Royal debts and difficulties ; and then it is reported that the poor weak Sultan, in his anger and mortification, drinks deep and desperate draughts of champagne and brandy." It is a sad story of so good and kind a heart ! One cannot but feel what he might have been, and how much he has had to battle against with his Ministers, and—worse than all—with himself, to do even what he has done for Turkey. Although I listened, I did not at all like our guest's talk, feeling shame for him, that he could so speak of these things, even though true, —so publish to strangers the disgrace of his own sovereign and country and religion. I am afraid there can be little good in him. He regretted very much not being able to speak English. We taught him to say " God save the Queen," which seemed to afford him vast satisfaction. He took up and buckled on an English sword, and said, what would he not give to be an Englishman, and to wear it in Her Majesty's service ! He took his fez off his head, and throwing it on the ground, shook his fist

at it. It was very painful, even if he was sincere; and I was glad when he was gone, and the ladies remained for a quiet chat. However, I have promised to pay a visit to his wife very soon, in the latticed house below. He said, "She still wears that rag, that symbol of slavery, the yashmak, which I long to see torn from the faces of our women."

So much for the conversation of our modern Turk, which I did not at all like or credit. He had a sharp, insincere face, and a restless manner, so different from the few I have seen of the fine, dignified Turkish gentlemen of the old school of Eastern manners. I had an amusing chat with Dhudu when he was gone,—interpreted, as usual, by my kind and constant friend, so untiring in translating that which I fear was not very interesting to herself. You will remember that I told you how poor the Almiras have become, since the death of their father. Dhudu spoke very sadly of him, and of his tenderness to them all, and showed us a beautiful ring he had given her; for, after the fashion of the country, they still possess some fine diamonds, although almost threadbare in their dress, and existing on air, according to our notions of living. Talking still quietly of their fallen fortunes, as we listened with interest, poor Dhudu went on to relate a new trouble. It

seems that her younger brother, who is remarkably good-looking, and showed a great talent for music, was sent to Vienna in their prosperous days for his education. His pianoforte-playing is thought much of here; and being so poor, and the Sultan having set the fashion of Turkish ladies learning music, he now gives lessons to the wives and daughters of several Pashas on the Bosphorus. He is married, greatly attached to his wife, and has two pretty children; added to this, he is a grave, shy young man. Well, Dhudu's trouble for her brother is this. He goes quietly in the morning to give his lesson. Perhaps there are two or three veiled ladies in the room into which he is ushered by the attendants. Sometimes the Pasha himself is there, but very seldom; there are always two or three black attendants. "The lesson begins," says Dhudu, in a melancholy voice, "and they are generally rather stupid. The men who guard them soon grow tired of looking on, and stroll away to their pipes. They are hardly outside the door, when down goes the yashmak of one of the ladies. She is very pretty, but very tiresome: my brother is afraid to look at her. What should he do if the Pasha were suddenly to return, or one of the slaves to enter and report this to him? So he turns his head away, and tries to induce her to go on with her lesson. Would you believe it," says Dhudu,

still more indignantly, “the other day, she took hold of his chin, and turned his face to hers, and said, laughing, ‘Why don’t you look at me, you pig?’ What can my brother do? The Pasha would never believe that it is not his fault. Sometimes one of them will creep under the piano-forte, and putting her finger into his shoe tickle his foot. Yesterday they slipped two peaches into his pocket, tied up in muslin with blue ribbons, clapping their hands and laughing when he found it out. You know what those peaches mean? They mean kisses,” said Dhudu, colouring; “and it made my brother so nervous, for the men were in the outer room, and might have heard all about it. He would be sorry to have them punished; yet they make his life miserable. That pretty one is the worst of all, she is so daring. I visit at that Harem, and went with my brother one morning. Knowing them so well, I took him in at the garden entrance, the way I always go myself. We heard somebody laugh, a loud, merry laugh, and—oh, what a fright I was in!—there she was, up in a peach-tree. My brother turned his head away, and walked on very fast; she pelted peaches at him, then got out of the tree, and would have run after him if I had not stopped her.” And here poor Dhudu fairly cried. “What can my brother do?”

I thought this account of a Turkish romp might

amuse you, as it did me, still sympathizing with the kind and anxious little sister.

I suppose these are wild and original specimens of Turkish ladies: those of rank are usually very peaceful and polite, I believe, although perfectly ignorant of even their letters. The little golden flower which I enclose was given me by a gentle and pretty Turkish lady yesterday; it is the blossom of a sort of mimosa, and is greatly prized here for its scent, which I think much too powerful to be agreeable. Small bunches are sold in the streets of Stamboul and Pera, prettily tied on fine branches of cypress or arbor-vitæ; for the mimosa bears so few leaves itself, that they are too valuable to be plucked. We have some very pretty gardens here, on the hill opposite, especially strawberry-gardens, where I am told that in May vast numbers of people come, and sit on cushions on the grass, and enjoy the ripe fruit. This is the village, too, in which the famous jasmine-sticks for chibouques are principally grown. The gardens look very pretty, the trees being trained as standards, from seven to ten feet high, and crowned with leaves and flowers. Great care is taken of these tall stems, which are bound round with linen. Tell Uncle Albert that I can get him a beautiful jasmine-stick here for a few piastres. An amber mouth-piece may cost from five pounds to fifty or

sixty—about the latter, if set with brilliants. I am told that Redshid Pasha has two pipes valued at eight hundred pounds each. He is reported to be the richest man in Turkey, as well as one of the best and most enlightened; and great things are confidently prophesied of him, should he ever come into power again.

I must conclude my long epistle, or the Mail will start without it. I missed the grand Review at Scutari last Monday. The Sultan was there, and they say that it was a very fine sight; our troops looked magnificent. By the way, I went the other day to Kadikoi, the next village to Scutari, with Mrs. Cumberbatch, to visit Mrs. Sanderson, the wife of the Consul of Broussa. I had been there some time before with her brother, Dr. Zohrab. They then lived in a pretty cottage close to the sea, which was easy enough to find, for your caique landed you on a rough little platform by the door. Now, to my surprise, all the houses dotting the shore of the Sea of Marmora, and clustering thickly behind, with so lovely a view of mountains and waves, had entirely disappeared, and nothing but a heap of ruins met our eyes. We had heard the fire-guns one dark night a short time ago, and had been told that the fire was at Kadikoi, but never expected to find nearly the whole of the village laid low. We were very much

puzzled at first to know what to do; but after wandering about for some time among the charred foundations of houses, and ruins of little streets and byeways, we met a couple of sturdy Greeks strolling along, who, in answer to the Cavass's inquiries for the family we were in search of, pointed to a few houses still standing on the hill above. So up we scrambled, in the burning sun, through steep and narrow pathways of stones and mortar, thinking how terribly the poor ladies and every one else must have been frightened by so vast a fire. Here and there we saw a Turk quietly gazing on the spot where perhaps his house once stood, or smoking contentedly at the opening of a tent put up within the scorched foundation-stones, and beside the torn and broken walnut-trees,—the poor village trees, under whose shade so many cups of coffee had been drunk, so many chibouques smoked! It was a melancholy sight, for many of these poor people are never able to erect their houses again, or at least have to spend months, and even years, in a thin and leaky tent. At last we reached a kind of narrow street at the top of the hill, between high garden-walls, and every now and then came to a closely latticed house, surrounded by beautiful gardens. We heard the buzz of soft voices, and saw shadows flitting across the close bars, as you often do when passing these poor pri-

soners on a sunny day. We now soon found our kind friends, and rested pleasantly. Ramazan, the great Turkish Fast, begins in a few days, the ladies told us. Every night the city and mosques will be illuminated; they say that it is a most beautiful sight. But I must conclude, or I shall certainly, in my fatigue, writing so much of matters Eastern, conjure up some frightful Geni of the 'Arabian Nights,' which, to say the least, would frighten poor little Fuad, sitting so faithfully beside me.

LETTER VI.

**EXCURSION TO THE CRIMEA.—WILD DOGS.—FLEAS.—INVASION OF
RATS AND MICE.—ENCOUNTER WITH A SPIDER.—GARDENING.**

Orta-kioy, April 22, 1856.

My dear Mother,

BEFORE this reaches you I shall have been to Sebastopol and returned. Mrs. Brett, my cousin Henry, Mr. Rumball and myself, with two maids and an Orderly of Major Brett's, start from Tophana tomorrow morning. It is lovely weather, and we hope to get there in thirty hours. To our great disappointment, neither Major Brett nor Edmund can accompany us; but they do not wish us to lose this opportunity of seeing the breaking-up of the Camp before Sebastopol, or rather its ruins. We have pressing and hospitable invitations from all our Crimean acquaintance, to spare tents, clean straw, ruined out-houses, and capital horses and mules. Russian officers and their ladies come down to the Camp almost every day, and we are looking forward with the greatest pleasure to our expedition. Hundreds of

troops are daily embarking from Balaklava. We shall be only just in time to have a good idea of the grand encampment.

I shall not have returned to Constantinople in time for the next Mail, so do not be uneasy at any unusual silence. Every time the wind waves the firtrees at Weybridge, do not imagine a tempest on the Black Sea, or fancy you see me clinging to a broken mast, or hencoop, on the wildest breaker there. I will write immediately on my return. Meanwhile I am hardly sorry to leave Orta-kioy, for our lives are literally made miserable by the fleas, which, as I told you, began to appear in alarming numbers immediately on the approach of warm Spring weather. We have passed whole nights without sleeping one moment. Morning after morning I see the sunrise from the divan in the outer room, where I have either sat quietly for hours, or wandered about despondingly in utter despair of sleep.

Sometimes I light a lamp, and attempt to read ; but a large party of wild-dogs have taken up their abode in the ruined garden of one of the burnt-down houses opposite my window. Whether other dogs intrude on their beat, or what it can be, I know not ; but about every ten minutes one or two sharp voices give an alarm, and then the whole pack sweeps desperately down, yelling and barking in the most hideous

manner you can conceive. About midnight out creep the mice, which however do not much trouble me, if even they carry on their gambols close to me. Rats run between the rafters over the ceiling like so many cart-horses, and, by the time I beat a retreat, may be heard pattering briskly on the keys of the piano-forte. Last week two of them jumped out of it, and on some of the notes of this unfortunate instrument seeming rather more out of temper than usual, we investigated the matter, and Apple-blossom fled precipitately from a huge old rat, who bounced out in her face, leaving a comfortable nest lined with bones and other delicacies behind him, which no doubt he had been preparing for a very happy family. The numerous wild-cats sit upon the housetop, and howl, scream, and quarrel, but do not seem to think of interfering with either rats or mice, after the fashion of respectable Western felines; they only unite with all the other creatures in making night terrible. It is quite tragi-comic to see us all meet in the morning, worn, feverish, and dispirited. At first we lamented and bemoaned with each other loudly, but have now become less lachrymose on the subject, merely bestowing a glance of pity on the last languid arrival at the breakfast-table, or an inquiry as to the particular species of enemy from which the patient may have suffered most.

"Fleas?"—"No, worse."—"Dreadful! Another cup of tea? What is to be done!"—"Dogs?" (to my cousin Henry, who is really ill). "No, mice; and a rat, who *would* sit on my bed dressing his whiskers."—"Was that you, walking the garden like a ghost in a white sheet?" "Were you sitting on the doorsteps at sunrise this morning?" "The mosquito season is coming on soon,"—with a deep sigh; "we seem about as unequal to it as they say France is to a continuance of the war." However, we have hopes of getting rid of our worst enemies, the fleas; for while I am away, Edmund goes on a visit, and Vassili promises to have all the matting taken up and every room well washed. The matting is very old, and it is no longer of any use merely to wash its surface; no doubt the habitation of the multitude is underneath. I have often been puzzled at the contradictory accounts of travellers on this subject; many speak of torments they have endured, and yet all agree about the perfect cleanliness of Turkish houses. The explanation is, that in Turkey no really good houses are ever let furnished, or accessible to strangers. There are no Turkish hotels, no refuge for travellers but the caravanserais of the 'Arabian Nights' and the peasant's hut.

Lodgings are only let by Greeks, and mixed races of the lower and dirty order, and fleas, multiply won-

derfully in a dry and warm climate like this, unless a house is kept clean and frequently washed, as the large Turkish houses are. The kiosk in which we live has been uninhabited for some time, the mattings are never scrubbed, and the divans never beaten; so we have suffered, as I say, beyond conception. Greeks and Armenians of the lower class think nothing of fleas here, and those who have not many servants get used to them. Beside all these pleasant creatures, we are sometimes enlivened by the visit of a centipede or two. I believe that all my movements are now rather grave and sedate, but I flew round the salaamlik faster than ever young lady whirled in a Polka, one quiet evening, on seeing one beneath the folds of my muslin dress. Apple-blossom rushed in with the charcoal pincers in answer to my call, and skilfully seized the creature, to my great satisfaction. Mr. Frank Buckland ought to be here,—he could carry on his favourite studies so pleasantly, finding interesting subjects and specimens on his very table, without losing valuable time in search of them; in fact, I think they would walk fearlessly into his microscope.

The other evening I happened to be quite alone, writing industriously for the morrow's Mail. It was one of those ghostly nights, when the wind howls a little, and white clouds hurry over the moon, and

curtains by open windows sway to and fro, rustling drearily, and strange footsteps seem to fall about the house. It was late, and I was very tired, having written several long letters. Vassili had placed a cake—one of his best “dolces”—with some sherry and water on the table before me. Presently I heard a noise, something like the pattering of a kid’s foot, on some papers scattered about, and, looking up, beheld an enormous spider making toward the cake. Anything so huge of the genus I never beheld; his long, hairy legs threw a fearful shadow on the white paper. Although accustomed to watching spiders, I could not help shuddering at this gaunt midnight visitor, who made a dash towards me when I moved my hand, and was evidently disposed to fight for the cake. To that he was quite welcome, but I so thoroughly objected to the risk of his running over my hand, that I resolved on capturing him if possible. For an instant we menaced each other; then, as quick as lightning, I popped my glass over him. He gave one rapid run round it, and finding no possible escape, sat a surly prisoner until Edmund came home, and we contrived to put him out of the window unhurt. Certainly this would have been a splendid specimen for our talented and earnest friend. Oscu would charm him too, by knowing where to look for scorpions about the

gravel-paths and old woodwork here, and by fearlessly watching their little forceps seize upon flies, as she suns herself under the verandah of their worm-eaten house. In the garden I sometimes find enormous green locusts, and on the hills grasshoppers, with wings and legs of every colour, from the brightest blue to the deepest red. Hundreds of these fly before your feet in summer-time, and the effect is very curious; when the wings are opened for a leap, the bright colours gleam in the sunshine, and when they alight on the ground, all vanishes into the light-brown of their backs and of the scorched turf, until the next rose-coloured leap forwards.

I must conclude: my time for writing is shortened today, for I have been very busy in the garden. Simione has brought out all his fine orange and lemon trees, acacias, and tree-geraniums from the conservatory, and we have been placing them up the doorsteps, and bordering the quaint little garden with them, after the favourite way here. Spring has come on very rapidly. The fig-tree by my window is putting forth its green leaves, and the large passion-flower over the trellis-work begins to revive after the winter storms; it has never lost its leaves, and the verbenas in the open borders have not been killed by the frosts, which, although sharp, do not last so long as in England.

Again adieu, my dear Mother ! I will write from Balaklava, but do not be anxious if one Mail arrives without any news, as I may not have a letter ready on our arrival there.

LETTER VII.

RETURN FROM THE CRIMEA.—COMMENCEMENT OF THE FAST OF RAMAZAN.—PROTESTANT CHURCH.—RETURN OF THE ARMY.—THE PEACE.

Balaklava, April 29th, 1856.

My dear Mother,

I HOPE you received my letter announcing our safe arrival here. A Mail is just starting for England, and I send these few lines, to let you know that we return to Constantinople today, after a delightful week in the Crimea, which ought to have been three, to enable us to see all we wished. On Thursday we spent a long day at Sebastopol; yesterday Colonel Hardinge most kindly made a party for us to the Valley of Baidar; but I must defer all accounts for a long letter when I have more time. I can hardly believe that we have watched the sunset from the Redan, listened to linnets singing on the banks of the Tchernaya, and gathered you some wild flowers from its stony banks; all seems so peaceful now! General Windham was here yesterday. We have seen

Crimean heroes to our heart's content, and talk in our sleep of the Mamelon and Malakoff.

Orta-kioy, May 7th.

Here I am, quietly settled in our little kiosk again, after all the pleasure as well as fatigue of our excursion to the Crimea. Every room has been thoroughly cleaned, the mattings taken up, and we can now sleep in peace. My dear little Fuad was so delighted to see me home again. How I wish you could see the Bosphorus in its Spring dress; it is really like Paradise, and the nightingales are singing the whole day long. Close to the cypress-trees on the shores are shrubs covered with a rich pink blossom; the contrast is beautiful.

Ramazan began yesterday, and the minarets were illuminated in the evening with wreaths of light. The thirty-seventh day is the grand one, when the Sultan goes to Mosque at night, in his beautiful state caïques.

Mr. Mansfield has been staying with us here, footsore from his tremendous walks in the Crimea, but greatly enjoying this little garden, which is extremely pretty now, with the passion-flower in full beauty over the arbour, orange-trees and tree geraniums all put out round the borders, and the old wooden balcony completely covered with clusters of pale pink roses.

The little Protestant Church here, on the other hill, was opened last Sunday. It is a very simple and pretty Gothic building, all of wood. The altar was wreathed with wild flowers, and a very impressive service was read by the Chaplain of the 'Queen.' The bells sounded so sweetly, ringing for the first Protestant Service on the shores of the Bosphorus.

The weather is warm, but with occasional showers, and everything looks as gay as possible. Ship-loads of troops are constantly passing down from the Black Sea. Early in the morning we hear the notes of a bugle, followed by a hearty English cheer from the men on their way home. Sometimes a drum beats three times, as the Transport steams slowly down, and then as many rounds of cheers are given. The red-coats are clustered, thick as bees, upon deck. I like to see them returning home, much better than to watch them going up to the Crimea, as I used to do before Sebastopol was taken. However, no one approves of this "French Peace," as it is called; and I do not like the idea of our countrymen all going away, and leaving us behind in this strange land. I long for home, and to see a green lane, and a cottage, and a bit of fern again, after all this fine panoramic scenery, which never touches one's heart.

LETTER VIII.

START FOR THE CRIMEA.—THE BOSPHORUS.—A SWELL ON THE BLACK SEA.—PLEASURES OF THE VOYAGE.—HARBOUR OF BALAKLAVA.—CHANGES ACCOMPLISHED.

Constantinople, May, 1856.

My dear Mrs. Austin,

I AM much flattered and pleased to find that my letters from this part of the world afford you any entertainment, and now send you a short account of our trip to the Crimea. I have not had time to do this before, having been out a great deal. I was unwilling too to miss writing you something about the illuminations of Ramazan and the three days' Feast of Bairam, at the moment it was all passing before me.

It was a lovely morning when we started from among the forest of masts at Tophana, and wound our way among French and English men-of-war, transports, and gunboats, into the more open part of the Bosphorus. The broad blue stream seemed to flow on more gloriously beautiful than ever, be-

tween the hills and valleys of the two great continents, already dressed in the delicate green of Spring. Even those who had lived here for years, stood on deck, glass in hand and thoroughly enchanted, marking the bright pink blossoms of the Judas-tree, contrasted with the rich, dark green of the cypress, slopes of white strawberry-blossom glistening on the hillsides, with orange-trees and the gayest flowers peeping through the trellised walls of many a harem-garden. On we swept through the sparkling waters, passing many a gay caique, many a light Greek barque, with its sails set and pennants fluttering merrily in the breeze. The white tents of the German Legion, encamped on the heights of Kulalee, shone in the morning sun. On we swept, past the hanging woods of Kandeliij, past Therapia and its arbutus-covered hills, past Beicos Bay and the numerous men-of-war lying at anchor there, past the Giant's Mountain and its traditional grave of Joshua, past the ancient ivy-covered Castle of Roumelia. Then we soon came to the sharp and rugged rocks, so famed in classic story, defending the wild and barren-looking shores of the Black Sea. Breakers were raging furiously against the sides of the watch-tower, and the sea looked dark and threatening before us—so sudden a change, from the bright and sunny waters of the Bosphorus! How many, we thought, have looked

on these gloomy shores since the War began, passing by them never to return !

At last we were fairly on the Black Sea. There was little wind, but what is called a heavy swell made our small steamer roll and pitch in a distressing manner. One by one the smiling and enthusiastic voyagers of the Bosphorus disappeared ; no laughs were longer heard on the deck, people returned books and glasses to each other, folded their wrappings round them, and assumed a quiet and distant demeanour. Our poor maids became dreadfully ill and desponding, and at last lay helplessly in their berths. Mrs. Brett and myself held out bravely to the last, when I saw her grow pale, looking on those terrible waves. I was just able to place a pillow under her head, and then I, who have always boasted my good seamanship, lay deadly faint on the deck beside her, the ship pitching more and more every moment in that remorseless sea, cruel as in ancient days !

“Poor ladies !” said a kind old gentleman, who was not ill, laying another warm cloak over us. “Just like the Babes in the Wood !” lisped a travelling exquisite, of anything but gigantic proportions, in a pitying tone ; “it is certainly true that we are the stronger sex !” I was just well enough to feel conscious of what a capital sketch this would make for our English friend ‘Punch.’

“Dinner, ladies!” screamed the cabin-boy. We had thought him such a pretty boy in the morning; now he appeared to us something worse than demon, and the voices of those able to eat below seemed like the horrid chattering of evil spirits. Somebody said something about Sir Walter Scott, and that “drunken as the Baltic” was nothing to this mad tossing about; but we were surly, and turned our heads away, lying cold and miserable under our cloaks, until a heavy night mist sent us staggering down to all the horrors of the ladies’ cabin below. I will not dwell on our sufferings; we could but bear them well, thinking constantly of our poor soldiers, tossed about in that dreadful sea, and lost in last November’s tempest!—we, with every comfort and bent on our amusement,—they crowded, comparatively uncared for, and bound to all the sufferings of war.

After another rough day and night, another morning dawned, cold and chilly. Ill and depressed, we felt as glad to hear the anchor drop as we could feel about anything, and made an effort to look out of a port-hole. Such barren cheerless rocks, after the sunny hills we had left behind! I remember the thought, or rather the hope, which crossed my mind: “Life’s weary journey over, may we arrive at a fairer shore!” It was too rough to land; so, when dressed,

we paced the deck, gazing on the grand but inhospitable coast, and full of sad thoughts of all that had been suffered there. Only three or four vessels were anchored near us ; and in the profound silence we heard birds piping amongst the grey rocks, over which some hugh snow-piled clouds were majestically rolling. The steward, coming on deck, told us that the Captain had gone on shore to get permission for his vessel to enter the harbour ; but that this was very difficult, crowded as it was now. He had been in the fearful storm when so many of our transports were lost, and gave us some obliging (but, in our depressed state, not particularly cheering) information as to the almost impossibility of keeping a vessel off the rocks in the event of a gale blowing strong upon them ; how we were anchored in the very spot where the ill-fated ‘ Prince ’ went down ;—how unlikely it was that the Captain would obtain permission from the Admiral to enter the harbour ; and lastly, that, if the breeze kept on blowing steadily as it did now, we should have an excellent opportunity of seeing what the sea could do here. However nothing was to be done but to wait patiently, and a fellow-passenger kindly pointed out to us General Marmora’s white tomb high on the cliff above, the ancient Genoese tower, and Miss Nightingale’s wooden hospital huts.

The Captain returned, and we met him anxiously. To our dismay, he said that the Admiral's orders were imperative; not another merchant-vessel was to be admitted into the harbour, already too much crowded. However, Mrs. Brett had long before sent her Orderly on shore with our letters ; some were to be despatched up in front, but one of hers was fortunately addressed to Colonel Hardinge, Commandant of Balaklava, an old friend of Major Brett's. How glad we were when the Colonel came on board, and kindly offered to take us on shore ! From the sea nothing is seen of the harbour, but clusters of tall masts, at some distance, apparently inland, and surrounded by cliffs. As you row on, a small opening in the rocks appears, and, corkscrew-like, you wind gradually into the creek, overhung on both sides by grim and gigantic cliffs, and commanded by the still formidable old tower. It was certainly a wonderful sight,—the vast crowds of shipping, the heights thickly studded with huts and soldiers, officers riding down, men, mules, and horses, thick as bees, busily cutting a steep and winding road. Sardinians strolling here, sailors wandering there, red-coats everywhere ; high above, and far down below, the same ever-shifting, crowded panorama of one scene of the great Russian War. We walked along the quay. What a sight it was, to look on the vast preparations for the return home of

a great army! Some of the countless ships were taking in crowds of hurrying soldiers; others, loads of shot and shell, brought down from the camp by fine sleek mules,—commissariat stores of all kinds, Russian cannon, vast quantities of iron, soldiers' clothing and accoutrements. The railway-cars were busily at work, transporting huge bales and packages. Officers, naval and military, were walking or riding up and down, inspecting, directing, and commanding. All was activity, energy of head and hand, so doubly striking to us, having but just left Constantinople. Every appliance of industry and invention was here; there, all falling into decay and corruption, from a seemingly charmed and fatal lethargy. It was curious to see, at a single glance around, the greatness of the nation, whose sons showed so strangely among these remote and frowning heights, and the vast and dreary Steppes beyond. Even the wretched mud-banks of the harbour were metamorphosed into a broad and excellent quay, the railway coming down close upon it. The Russians will surely never recognize the place on their return, Colonel Hardinge and others have worked so untiringly and so well. The foundation of this long quay was made by throwing old hampers, filled with stones and pieces of rock, into the broad border of morass. But perhaps I may be telling what you know already.

After hearing all the horrors of this place when our army landed,—men and horses sticking in mud and mire,—it seems now, with its railway and fine roads, a marvellous picture of skill and industry. People in England can hardly form an idea of what our officers and men have accomplished, of the gigantic difficulties overcome at a fearful cost. We were sorry to quit the busy shore, crowded with our countrymen, to return to the ship. After having been so much among Turks and Eastern people, the sound of many English voices was very pleasant.

But I must conclude, my dear Mrs. Austin, or I shall lose the Mail, or tire you. My letter has grown so much longer than I intended it to be, that I must send the rest of it in my next huge envelope for Weybridge.

LETTER IX.

LANDING AT BALAKLAVA.—COLONEL HARDING.—RUSSIAN GOVERNOR'S HOUSE.—A PRISONER OF WAR.—HEIGHTS OF BALAKLAVA.—MISS NIGHTINGALE'S HOSPITAL.—“THE SISTERS.”—FLOWERS.—SOUVENIR OF THE GOVERNOR.

Constantinople, May, 1856.

My dear Mrs. Austin,

We passed a rather rough night outside the harbour of Balaklava, on our return to the ship, and in the morning the sea was so high that we began to fear it would be impossible to land. Unaccountably we had received no reply from any of the letters sent up to the front, and it seemed that we were to be prisoners on a stormy coast, and to see nothing more of the Crimea, thanks to the Admiral, against whom I vented my displeasure as we paced the deck. “Patience!” said my pretty, good-tempered friend, “there is a boat coming to us;” and, dancing up and down on the great waves, came Colonel Hardinge again, and his stout rowers. We looked upon him as our good genius, especially when he offered us a

room at head-quarters, that we might not risk being kept out at sea. I don't think invitations are often more cordially given, and am certain that none was ever more delightedly received. Leaving our maids to pack up and come on shore in the ship's boat with the Orderly, we stepped into the dancing boat below.

We were soon on the crowded quay. The square, low-roofed, white house, with a sort of balcony in front, which shows so conspicuously in the prints and photographs of Balaklava, is now head-quarters, and was formerly the house of the Russian Governor. It is built much after the fashion of Greek houses here at Constantinople, with one large room, from which several others open on both sides. It was very cold, with the sharp and penetrating east wind so much felt in the Crimea. The Colonel had ingeniously invented a fireplace, in a hole in the white-washed wall formerly appropriated to a stove; his handsome English terrier was warming his nose before it; a real kettle was singing merrily; a few books were strewn about. We settled down joyfully upon the hearth, and thought ourselves the most fortunate women in the world.

Strange it seemed, to be in a place the name of which had thrilled the world with interest but a few months before, and which we had so little expected

to see,—we two, strangers to each other then, like sisters now. First, we gladdened our hearts with a cup of tea; then we wrote letters to Constantinople, announcing our safe arrival, and afterwards looked over the curious old house, which seems to have been much knocked about when the place was taken by the English.

There were only a few old and worm-eaten chairs and tables in the outer room; ugly brass candelabra, which the Colonel had polished up from their ancient dirt, were fixed against the bare and white-washed walls. The large double windows opened on to the wooden balcony. In one of them stood an equestrian statuette of Napoleon, with both arms and part of his cocked hat knocked off: he had suffered severely in the war. One of the opposite rooms was rather better furnished, and the walls covered with paintings after the manner of the Greek Church. This was doubtless, we thought, the apartment of the Governor's lady. Colonel Hardinge had given strict orders that nothing should be disturbed, and even himself watered a large and beautifully trained hay-plant in the window, which had evidently been a great favourite with the owner. In another recess of the window lay a touching evidence of hasty flight; it was a little doll's cap, with the gay ribbons not yet quite sewn on, and a small toy of seed-beads

of many colours, containing tiny rings and necklaces,—threaded perhaps with childish delight just as our great ships of war were coming up. Colonel Hardinge had one prisoner in the place, a pretty pigeon, which had been caught and given to him at the taking of Sebastopol. A soldier had made him a strange little pigeon-house out of some rough wood, and after the quaint model of the Greek Church at Balaklava. This was placed on a tall beer-barrel in the sitting-room, for fear of rats, which abounded in the Governor's house. The captive surveyed us all very complacently from his high place, cooing occasionally; and although his wing was only clipped, he never attempted to leave it. Outside the windows, on the rough old balcony, was the Colonel's garden, in which he took great interest during his few moments of leisure. He used to hang over his mignonette, sown in deal boxes, and water his irises and other roots, with a solicitude enviably philosophic when one considered that the poor flowers would be left to die in a few weeks, after all his care. This soldier's *ménage* interested us very much, although, on seeing more of it, we felt humiliated to find what delightful little dinners, and cheerful, chatty fireplaces, our masters can contrive to produce under great difficulties, without the aid of a single creature of womankind.

This first day of our arrival we took a long ramble on the heights of Balaklava, by the old Genoese castle. On one side is a solitary and magnificent view of sea and cliffs; but pass a sharp and lofty turning, and the crowded port beneath, and all the active military movements, are instantly before your eyes. We then walked among the scattered wooden huts a little lower down,—beautifully neat and clean, with broad and well-swept roads between.

Many of the occupants evidently took great pleasure in the names so carefully painted on some of them,—perhaps the same as those in which their wives and children lived in England. “Albert Terrace,” “Prospect Cottage,” amused us much, and especially one tiny wooden hut, looking not much bigger than a toy on those great hills, dignified with the appellation of “Marine Villa.” Many of these had pretty little flower-borders, about two feet wide, with not a weed to be seen, and carefully watered. Higher up, we came to Miss Nightingale’s hospital huts, built of the same long planks, and adorned with the same neatly bordering flowers. The sea was glistening before us, and as we lingered to admire the fine view, and to look with interest about us, one of the nurses, a kind motherly-looking woman came into the little porch, and invited us to enter and rest after our steep walk, which we were

very glad to do. A deal stool was kindly offered to us by another and younger Sister, a bright, fresh-looking, and intelligent woman. On the large deal table was a simple pot of wild flowers, so beautifully arranged that they instantly struck my eye. The good Sisters were enthusiastic in their praises of the beauty and rarity of the flowers about the heights and valleys of Balaklava, of which they always gathered a fresh bouquet, they said, in the early morning walk which each took in turn. They were most agreeable women, their eyes sparkling with interest in speaking of simple things and fine views. The first whom we saw, "Sister Margaret," showed us a basket of three beautiful kittens, which she had named Alma, Balaklava, and Inkerman. The little creatures were found and saved at the taking of Sebastopol; they were fat and playful, and seemed to delight as much in Sister Margaret, as she did in them. How charming the little deal house appeared to me, with its perfect cleanliness, its glorious view, and the health, contentment and usefulness of its inmates! How respectable their few wants seemed; how suited their simple dress to the stern realities, as well as to the charities, of life; how fearlessly they reposed on the care and love of God in that lonely place, far away from all their friends; how earnestly they admired

and tended the few spring flowers of a strange land ; these brave, quiet, women, who had witnessed and helped to relieve so much suffering !

This was the pleasantest visit I ever made. Miss Nightingale had been there but a few days before, and this deal room and stool were hers. There were but two convalescent patients lying in the little ward ; but the "Sisters" said that there was a great deal of fever still among the Sardinian troops, and that they knew it by the frequent applications for ice from their camp. At last we said adieu, and parted with regret. Walking homeward by another and less frequented pathway over the heights, we found many of the wild flowers of which the "Sisters" had spoken. It seemed a pity to see horses tethered in the poor ruined vineyards, and vines trampled down, once so carefully tended. It was a curious scene. Far and wide, on the hills and slopes, many a group and many a horseman was returning to camp. The evening light fell brightly on the white crosses of the distant Sardinian cemetery, and on the tomb of their ill-fated General on the cliff; bugles were ringing here and there, and lights were beginning to appear in the valley below.

We had almost regained our quarters, when we heard a voice calling to us ; and looking back, we saw a soldier, with a bundle of flowers in his hand.

They were specimens of a beautiful blue and yellow iris, which I had admired at the hut. The kind “Sisters” had hastened to get us some roots, and had sent the old soldier after us with them. We have planted them in a little box, and hope to see them flourish one day in England, a remembrance of our friends and of this pleasant walk. We made the Colonel a fresh bouquet for his table on our return, and, while the pleasant after-dinner chat was going on, prepared the different specimens of plants which we had found, to form the first chapter of a Crimean herbarium. Mr. Walker, a friend of Colonel Hardinge’s, has arranged some beautiful ones, from every battle-field and all places of interest here, and was most kind and patient in helping us.

We repaired to our room early, anxious to be fresh for the morrow. The maids were snugly ensconced on a large sofa at the further end of the apartment,—our “things” neatly arranged on the large and dreary toilette-table of the fugitive Governor’s lady. A dilapidated work-box stood on a side table, the needles just beginning to rust in knitting suddenly left off. A bouquet of hay-flowers stood in a glass case beside it, and a few well-thumbed books were scattered about. On a chest of drawers lay a broken toy : we hoped that the little owner was still safe and well. Opening a crazy wardrobe, to

hang up my dress, the Governor's uniform quite startled me. There were two rents on the breast of the coat; I suppose the poor man had cut off his two Orders in the hurry of flight. On how many gala and happy home days he may have worn them here! We began to grew nervous, looking over these ghostly things in the deep silence of night; and were glad to remind each other that the Governor and his wife were both alive and well. Presently the challenge of the sentinel, and the cheerful "All 's well!" reassured us; and it was pleasant to sink to sleep, feeling that we were guarded by English soldiers.

LETTER X.

BALAKLAVA.—THE CAMP.—THE BATTLE-FIELD.—VISIT TO THE
MALAKOFF AND THE BEDAN.—BOTANIZING.—BAIDAR.—RETURN
FROM THE CRIMEA.

Constantinople, May, 1856.

My dear Mrs. Austin,

VERY early in the morning, as you may suppose, every one was stirring at Balaklava, and the tramp of soldiers, the clattering of horses and mules, and the thousand other sounds of the great embarkation, began again for the day. Colonel Hardinge had most kindly made arrangements for us to go to Sebastopol, but could not spare time to go himself; it was no joke being Commandant of Balaklava just then.

Mrs. Brett, fortunately for her, is a perfect horse-woman; so the Colonel mounted her upon a favourite but fiery horse of his own, and her Orderly found one somewhere in the camp. I should have been grateful for a humbler steed; but my saddle had been unfortunately left by mistake at Constantinople,

and no other was to be got. So Colonel Macmurdo was good enough to lend me an ambulance, drawn by four stout mules, for myself and the rest of our party.

Off we started at a brisk pace through the narrow street of Balaklava, if street could be called merely a few old whitewashed Russian houses, scattered here and there among the hundreds of long wooden huts and storehouses of our army. We could but wonder at the fine road which, after crossing the railway, we soon came to—the perfect order in which everything seemed to be, the prodigious Commissariat dépôts, the fine teams of mules coming down from the front, laden with all sorts of stores to be returned to England; Tartars, in their fur caps, driving quietly along in rough little wooden carts; and crowds of nondescript, half Eastern, half European-looking people, mixed up with soldiers and sailors—English, French, and Sardinians.

The “hotels” were very curious too. All constructed of deal, like every other building, but gaily decorated with little flags, fluttering all round, after the manner of the Crystal Palace, and bearing the high-sounding names of “*Hôtel de l’Europe*,” “*Hôtel de la Paix*,” painted in large letters on their sides. A passing glance showed the single apartment of these hotels, neatly papered with the ‘Illustrated London News,’ with here and there a few

gayer scraps of art. Then we came to the different town-like encampments of our army, scattered over the vast steppes and plains of which one has so often read. Every moment something ingenious met the eye by the wayside,—nicely contrived and sheltered little gardens,—tub sentry-boxes, prettily roofed with turf, a fir-tree planted on each side by way of ornament,—neat little fowls' houses, and flourishing-looking cocks and hens sunning themselves at the doors,—a goat tethered here and there,—a cosy turf dog-kennel, the faithful friend in excellent condition dozing in the cleanest straw. In fact, it would have taken us days to see half of the great and small things of interest in this wonderful Camp.

The white tents of the French army in the distance, with a glimpse of the sea before them, found a beautiful picture, in the bright beams of the morning sun. A more touching one, was the wayside cemetery of the 33rd Regiment, in which monuments were being erected to the memory of those buried there. The graves were very thick, and the rows of white stone, inscribed with many a gallant name, stood out in sad array against the clear blue sky. Soldiers were busy laying turf around them, planting arbor-vitæ and juniper trees, and placing shot and shell at the head and foot of each. The little paths were also bordered with fresh green turf; and it seems to have

been a labour of love to leave these graves as fair as possible.

The whole was surrounded by a strong wall of turf and stone. Far away in the distance, on a vast slope of land, lay the Zouave burial-place,—merely fragments of rock and stone thrown down, with here and there a rough wooden cross,—looking so bare and desolate, compared to our much cared-for one. How sad it was, to see the thousands left far behind in these dreary plains.

Further on is the ravine called “The Valley of the Shadow of Death,” where our poor soldiers were shot off the rugged cliffs on each side, by hundreds, when fighting their way on to Sebastopol. There we met a large party of Russian officers, driving handsome droshkeys, with four horses abreast. They bowed to us with the greatest politeness, and each party regarded the other with interest. We stopped for some time at the foot of the ravine, and collected as relics a few pieces of the vast quantities of shot and shell scattered about. The ground was torn up in every direction, the banks of the little mountain stream broken down here and there, and its clear waters bubbling over more shot and fragments of shell than pebbles. A ruined farm-house and vine-yard lay in the hollow; we crossed over to look at the crumbling foundations, and gathered a few sprigs

of a poor rose-tree, and some pretty bunches of apple-blossom which had sprung from torn and broken branches, yet marking “where once the garden smiled.”

A little further on we caught sight of the sea. Its blue waters, glittering in the sunshine, interlaced, as it were, vast piles of white stone ruins, rising abruptly out of them. And this was once the fair yet dreadful Sebastopol! We looked long with wonder at its utter destruction. Walking up the hill, we met a party of “Sisters of Charity,” quietly looking about, and pointing out to each other the ruined garden of the slope beneath. It was indeed a sad sight; noble poplar-trees shattered in the middle of their lofty trunks, their tops hanging down, and broken branches swaying drearily in the wind; masses of gravel and earth hurled upon what were once, perhaps, cheerful gravel paths for the townspeople to stroll about on; fine shrubs torn up and dying; turf ploughed up, scorched, and blackened. Ruin on the most gigantic scale, everywhere! And the remembrance of the grief, and horror, and suffering which the struggle had cost to thousands of human beings, made an acute impression of pain on my mind which I shall never forget. The fine barracks, which we next came to, were powdered almost to dust; but as to the magnificent docks, blown to pieces, the huge blocks of

beautiful pink granite with which they were entirely lined, toppling one over the other, as if they, and the great oaken gates, had been dashed and tossed up together by an earthquake or some hideous convulsion of nature,—even remembering what war is, it was difficult to believe this to be the work of man !

Then we went by masses of ruined storehouses toward the Malakoff, looking frowning and formidable still, though conquered. We toiled up with difficulty in a burning sun, our feet sinking deep in the loose earth and sand at every step. You may well imagine the almost breathless interest with which we looked at everything here ; at all the signs of the deadly and terrific struggle which had so lately taken place. It seemed almost startling *not* to hear the cries and the din of war, which we had so often heard described. Torn and empty cartridge-boxes lay thick on the ground—shot and shell, as hail after a storm,—here a torn shoulder-knot, there a broken scabbard. We crept beneath eight or nine feet of sand and earth, supported by enormous rafters, into one of the cavities where the Russian gunners lived during the siege. One of the poor fellows' rope shoes lay near the entrance ; and I carried off a heavy iron hammer and a small crow-bar, to take to England.

Marvellous defences these were ; their foundations formed of hundreds of baskets, filled with sand, which

even women and children toiled night and day to bring up. It was sunset when we gained the summit, and the tower of the Malakoff; and oh, what a magnificent spectacle it was, to look upon the distant range of mountains, the ruined city, and the sunken ships,—on the Mamelon, the Redan, the Garden Battery,—all the grand plan of the attack and defence, bathed in the glorious purple and violet light of the sun's parting rays! The blue sea glittered to our right, and the tall masts of many a stately ship at Kamiesch rose clear in the distance.

It was time, but so difficult, for us to depart; for we felt chained to the place, as if to stamp everything, and for ever, on our minds. Even now I seem to see it all before me, and to hear plainly the air of a little Norman song which one of the few French soldiers left in the tower was singing, as he roasted his coffee in a huge fragment of shell. Nature seemed to remember that it was spring-time, even in this scene of desolation, for a nightingale was singing in the distance, and a few wild flowers springing up in companionship with some bright tufts of turf beyond the line of earthworks. A starling sa whistling on a piece of broken wall to the left, and frogs were croaking contentedly in a grass-grown pool, probably once belonging to the poor farmhouse of which only those few scorched bricks remained.

When we reached the Redan, it was still the same sunset picture—grand beyond expression—of the fearful struggle ; but there we saw the sun sink beneath the waves, bathing the whole scene and every object, from the broken cannon to the little purple Iris flowers springing up on the trampled earth and amidst shot and shell, in the same unclouded blaze of golden light. Then, in the profound silence, when the grey twilight came falling sadly over all, it seemed to us that the splendour which had entranced us was like the glory our brave men had gained, and the darkness, like the pain and sorrow for their loss. We paced the fearful path up which our soldiers trod, and gathered, from around the huge holes made in it by bursting shells, many of the same wild Irises which we had noticed by the Mamelon ; their lovely violet colour, mixed with a brilliant yellow, gleaming like jewels among the stones, and looking strangely beautiful amidst those signs of war. These are carefully dried in my book, and prized beyond everything I possess, as memorials of that sunset. Passing over the vast camp in profound darkness, excepting the light afforded by the large, bright stars, which gleamed suddenly forth,—encampment after encampment,—each marked out by its numerous twinkling lights stretching far and wide over the vast hills and plains and valleys, was another memorable sight to

us. Everything was profoundly tranquil, only now and then we passed a soldier wrapped in his long cloak, and returning to quarters. It was bitterly cold, and we were glad to hear the challenge of the sentinel, on arriving at last at Balaklava, and still more so, to be welcomed back by our kind host, who had begun to think some accident must have happened to us.

But I must write no more of our delightful trip, for my pen lingers with so much pleasure on the recital of many happy days, that it would willingly write much more than I fear you would care to read. However I must tell you, my dear Mrs. Austin, you who love flowers so much, that we passed a whole day botanizing in Leander Bay, among the rocks, for beautiful orchidaceous plants, and in the green valleys and ruined orchards and mountain slopes about, found an endless variety. We took our luncheon on the steep sides of a ravine, filling our cup from the mountain-stream, leaping its way down to the wide sea beneath, watching the many-coloured lizards playing about in the sun, listening to distant bugles, and talking quietly of pleasant things long to be remembered. The day after that, our whole party rode to Inkermann, but, to my great regret, I could not accompany them, having no saddle. So I walked about Balaklava, seeing the admirable hospital arrangements, and

other things of interest ; and altogether was consoled for not going, by finding Mr. Mansfield and Colonel Campbell at Colonel Hardinge's on my return, having a long chat about Weybridge, and afterwards receiving a visit from my husband's old friend Major Loundes, who, as well as other friends, had not been able to find us out before, in consequence of our ship being outside the harbour.

Admiral Freemantle dined with Colonel Hardinge in the evening, and was much amused at having been called a cruel potentate by us both, in our difficulties, and with the inspection of our collection of relics from Sebastopol.

Another pleasant day at Baidar was our last. We passed through the beautiful Sardinian camp, famed for order, ingenuity, and music, and planted with pretty clumps and avenues of fir-trees, to the camp of the Highlanders on the heights of Kamara, and then walked through the valley beyond, gathering specimens of wild flowers for our collection. The thorn, called here "Christ's thorn," was in blossom ; linnets were singing, and bugles ringing on the hills ; every sound so sweet and cheerful, and we, so thoroughly enjoying a ramble through this fine scenery, that the whole story of the war seemed like a dreadful dream, put by on a bright morning.

How I wish you could have seen the fine Woron-

zoff Road, along which our four sleek mules, with their soldier drivers, stepped out so finely after the party on horseback. It is quite a mountain road, with precipitous fir-clad hills above, and valleys of oak, and woods, and rocky streams, and green meadows below. Spring was just budding in the valley of Allucca ; soldiers strolling about in small parties here and there in the sunshine ; a few Tartar peasants jogging along in their wooden carts, all quietly enjoying the greenwood. At Baidar we stopped to dine ; and by the time Colonel Hardinge's soldier-cook and Tartar servants had spread the feast under a noble oak-tree, the rest of our party came galloping back from the Phorus Pass—one of the most magnificent sea and mountain views, they said, in the world. However, I had had my stroll about the beautiful slopes of the valley, and could regret nothing.

Many a day, we said, even then, we shall talk over that delightful party assembled under the old tree at Baidar. Everything was so different from the worn-out amusements of ordinary life,—all that we had seen so full of interest,—the party so well chosen for pleasant conversation and sparkling good-humour! Is it not well to have a few days in one's life like this?

I think I see now the party of riders gallantly mounted, and galloping far before my jingling mule-

team, on our return home, in another of the glorious sunsets of the Crimea, which light up even its vast plains and huge and dreary cliffs into perfect brilliancy. Now and then, each party stopped to admire any particularly fine point together, and then merrily sped on again, across the Camp, to Balaklava. But for the last evening ! The next morning we said adieu to our kind and courteous host, and to the good old house which had been to us the head-quarters of so many golden days in our memory, and to the many who had shown us every possible kindness and attention. Mr. Arthur Walker gave me a little book, containing dried specimens of flowers from each battle-field, and from every place of interest in the Crimea, including a beautiful white immortelle, which, curiously enough, he found growing wild on the grave of poor General Cathcart. Mrs. Brett had a square wooden box of flowers in full blossom, which she was taking down to cheer her drawing-room at Pera, and which we called her Crimean garden : the Iris roots of the good "Sisters" were there, snowdrops from the Heights of Balaklava, and many bright things from Baidar and Leander Bay.

On reaching our ship, we found the lower deck covered with a savage and motley crew. Never had I conceived any creatures so fearful in the shape of humanity. They were the harpies of the camp and

the battle-fields, returning to Constantinople, now that the war was ended. I often used to watch them, and think of the frightful things they had done. Many of them had the richest cushions and carpets spread upon the deck, and sat huddled up together, frequently opening their dirty bundles, and taking out snuff-boxes, pistols, and things of all kinds to polish, by way of passing the time. One mere boy among them had no less than three watches and chains. Almost all had two or three signet and other rings on their fingers; one dreadful-looking old woman, many Orders, especially two of the Russian Order of St. George, which she wanted us to buy. Several of the men had on handsome but stained and dirty boots, spurs, and other things evidently once belonging to English officers, which it made one shudder to look upon. We longed to get to the end of our voyage; but it seemed that we were doomed to mis-haps by sea, for a slight accident happened to the machinery one night, which detained us, with fires out and steam let off, for some hours, beating about on the rough waves. Then the captain missed the mouth of the Bosphorus, and we were a whole day steaming down the wild coast of Anatolia, where we saw the wrecks of four small vessels, which had been driven on shore,—no cheerful sight, with a strong wind blowing, the ship's officers quite out of their

reckoning, and no water on board ; for they had shipped bad and brackish water at Balaklava, which even the savage party on deck could not drink, and we were almost famishing with thirst, only wetting our lips now and then with a little claret. I never thought to have been so glad to see again the castles at the mouth of the Bosphorus, as when we at last came to it, and the challenging gun was fired, and we anchored for the night in the well-known place.

Nothing could be more delightful, after the dreary shores and dull waves of the Black Sea ; nothing more striking and surprising than the change, in half an hour, to the softest air, the scent of a thousand flowers, the ceaseless trill of the nightingale, and the fantastic streaks of phosphoric light on the musical ripples of the water. It told at once the whole story of the languor and dreaminess of Eastern life. One would think that Tennyson must have witnessed a night like this, to have written his "Lotus-Eaters," for it was like many pages of Eastern poetry, and read and understood at a glance.

LETTER XI.

VISIT TO A TURKISH HAREM.—THE GARDEN.—THE CHILDREN—
SCENES IN THE GARDEN.

Orta-kioy, May 20th, 1856.

My dear Mother,

YESTERDAY morning, while walking in the garden, the Armenian girls came to ask me to pay a visit, with them, to the Turkish ladies in the yellow house below. I was very glad to go, and off we started ; the good old lady, who had put on her sabled jacket for the occasion, leading me by the hand, after the simple and kindly fashion of the country. Rich and fashionable Armenians of the present day attempt the French style of dress ; those of the old school still retain the veil and feridjee ; my friends adopt a middle course, and wear only a handkerchief bound round their plaits of hair in the street,—neither the French bonnet nor the Eastern veil. It was lovely weather yesterday, with a light and refreshing north breeze, bringing down many white-sailed vessels ;

caïques rapidly threading their way over the swift and silver stream ; sea-birds flitting about ; while the many-shaded green hills above looked more bright and varied than usual. Transports slowly steaming down from the Crimea, the decks covered with hardy, weather-beaten troops, tell so cheerfully that the war is over. The merry notes of a bugle, or the sound of a hearty cheer, frequently reach the shore these pleasant spring mornings, and make one rejoice for the brave fellows returning home.

We soon reached the garden-door of the Harem, and found ourselves in a pretty but formal garden—formal, perhaps, on account of the shade which long trellised paths, bordered with tall orange and lemon trees, afford in the sultry heat of summer. There was a beautiful yew-tree in the very heart of the garden, and underneath, as far as its rich dark branches extended, a pretty pavement of pebbles had been laid, in small black and white stones. The design was charming, and something like the disc of a huge sunflower. Cushions were arranged all round, and pretty little lamps were suspended from the branches ; I suppose, to light up for a supper or concert of music, and the usual night feasting of Ramazan. None of the ladies were there now ; but cross-legged, under a tree close by, sat a hideous negress, with a fair, sickly-looking child in her arms,

which she was trying to rock to sleep. She seemed savagely fond of it, and would hardly permit us to look at the poor little thing, but roughly said to Miss Barker that it was ill, and afraid of strangers. No doubt the faithful nurse feared the "evil eye;" and if the poor baby had been worse that night, she would have laid it to our charge. She did not offer to guide us to the house; but, calling out in a harsh grating voice, some other slaves appeared, and leading the way up a wooden flight of steps, covered with luxuriant creepers, ushered us into a large cool hall, floored with the usual matting. We were then conducted through several rooms, to a shady one, with a painted ceiling and latticed window, looking on to the Bosphorus. Besides the divan, there was nothing in this apartment but a kind of cabinet, filled with some old china, and a table, upon which two gaudy clocks, several flower-vases and other ornaments, were heaped up, just as if intended for inspection and sale,—in fact, as you would see them at a broker's shop. As we were noting these things, and the comfortless look of the room, the door opened quickly, and a young Turkish lady, dressed in a light-coloured muslin jacket and trousers, ran up to the Armenian ladies, kissed them rather boisterously, laughed like a school-girl, with a stray shy look at us, and seated herself on the divan. She laughed

again in my face when I was introduced to her, and said something, which, on inquiry, I found was, that she thought a bonnet must be a very uncomfortable thing. Notwithstanding this attack on our national costume, I offered my hand in a friendly way, which she took with another giggle, and then clapped her hands for the eternal sweetmeats and coffee, which she afterwards declared she had almost forgotten to call for, it being Ramazan. She was not at all handsome : her eyes were rather fine, but the face fat, heavy, and uninteresting, although certainly good-tempered looking. She had several slaves about her, but none of them at all pretty, except one charming little girl of eight, beautiful as an angel, the child of a former wife who was dead, and evidently the pet of the Harem.

The lady of whom I am speaking is wife of the Efendi who drank tea with us the other evening. The brother's wife seems to be the chief, and she sent a message to me, begging to be excused, as she was unwell, and about to go to the bath. Of course we begged that she would not disturb herself. The younger lady offered to show us the rest of the Harem ; and she seemed as much amused as a child, leading us from one latticed room to another, and laughing all the while. An old lady now joined us, in such an odd flannel jacket and trousers that, look-

ing at her vast ill-concealed dimensions, it was difficult to preserve a grave countenance. I suppose she was some ancient relative, and could not help thinking very favourably, at the time, of the flowing grey or black silks, and the snow-white caps of our grandmothers. Each lady had her separate suite of apartments, and each her separate slaves. One young lady, also a relative of the Effendi's, we were told, was anxious to show us hers, and they all pressed forward with the utmost kindness to display anything which they thought might please us,—just like children when they have other children to amuse. Our moon-faced friend, (a great compliment, by the bye, to her face in Turkey,) produced with great glee a musical box, and set it playing. The old lady, seeing that we liked it, immediately touched the spring of a clock, and set it off to another merry tune; a third lady, not to be outdone in hospitality, ran off for hers; and the three, playing vigorously different tunes at the same time, formed, as you may suppose, an exhibition extremely pleasant and novel, and we laughed outright, which convinced the ladies how much we were entertained. We escaped from this infliction at last, by the chief wife of the elder brother sending to say that, if we liked to see her apartment, we were quite welcome. At first we hardly liked to go, but our merry hostess pressed us to do

so, adding, “It will do her good to see you; she is dull about her sick child, whom you saw in the garden.” So we went. These rooms were prettiest of all, and looking on to the garden. They were hung with pale blue silk, instead of flowered chintz, like the others; for the lady inhabitant had been a present from the Sultan, and etiquette demands that her apartments be better furnished and adorned than all the rest. Her bedroom was charmingly fitted up; a deep alcove covered with rich Persian carpets, filled with luxurious cushions and embroidered coverlets, taking up one side of it. On the other side was a light green and gold bedstead, covered with gauze curtains. The toilette-table was extremely pretty, dressed with muslin and lace, after our fashion; a Persian looking-glass, shaped like a sunflower, in mother-of-pearl, hanging above it. The ceiling was painted with a trellis-work of birds, leaves and flowers. Three steps led into the cool and shady garden, and to the wide-spreading household tree I told you of. Opposite the alcove were doors; one led into a sitting-room, hung with the same blue silk, and furnished with richly cushioned divans; the other opened into a beautiful white marble bath, the air still heavy with steam and perfume. The poor lady had just taken her bath. Oh, how pale and sickly she looked, and how very pretty she

was—so touchingly gentle and graceful in her manners! I was much charmed. She talked some time to us in her pretty room, but merely asking a few questions, as to how long I had been here, and how I liked the country. Presently the black nurse came in with the little child. It was still moaning in her arms; and as the poor mother hung over it, it was difficult to say which looked the fastest fading away. My old Armenian friend took it kindly in her arms, and, speaking Turkish, talked over its ailments, while I walked with the other ladies to the end of the apartment: then, seeing their conversation over, I returned to say adieu. A sweeter or a sadder face I never saw: it quite haunted me. Our merry friend did not show much sympathy for the invalid, and insisted upon our returning to her apartments, to show me her clothes and jewels. Robe after robe, carefully pinned up in muslin, was produced, of every colour and shade, for all the ladies ran to fetch their whole stock of finery. Dresses of light green edged with gold, and violet trimmed with silver, flowered dresses, embroidered dresses, shawls, scarfs, and jackets, were produced in endless array, and with an immense amount of chattering. Then I must be dressed up in them, they said, laughing with delight as the masquerade progressed. You would certainly never have known me in the

gorgeousness of Eastern array, which however they pronounced became me very well. Two large sprays of brilliants, set as a kind of convolvulus, with turquoise centres, were fastened in each side of my hair.

All on a sudden, the beautiful little child I told you of, burst into a violent passion of tears, and I was concerned to know what ailed her. "She weeps because she does not also possess jewels and rich clothes," said the black nurse, soothing her. "Never mind," said my merry, round-faced friend, who was trying on a rose-coloured feridjee with great satisfaction; "one day or another you will marry, and then you will have plenty."

While we were thus playing children, the poor sick lady entered with her nurse and baby, sitting on the divan at the further end of the room, and languidly looking on. Never have I seen any one look so utterly hopeless and miserable as she did, turning every now and then to her evidently dying child. I said to the brother's wife how much I pitied her anxiety about the poor little thing. Her reply was translated: "Oh, she did not think the child was so very bad; it only had an abscess behind the ear, which the holy Imaum at the mosque was going to lance. The fact was," (and here she giggled heartily again), "that the mother was suffering more from jealousy than from anything else." The idea seemed too ridiculous

to her sister-in-law. "Her husband had just taken a new wife, and they had gone to Stamboul that morning. He used to be very fond of those two," pointing to the faded mother and child; "but now of course he is pleased with Ayesha, who is young, pretty, and sprightly. However, she will soon get used to it; she was stupidly fond of him, and has a jealous temper." I was glad to be able to say to Miss Barker, "Let us go," without being understood.

The very atmosphere of the Harem seemed to stifle me; and I could hardly help throwing the jewels and finery away from me with disgust. What Mrs. Longworth told me some time ago is quite right. "If a Turkish woman possesses an atom of refinement, one particle of affection for either husband or children, one thought of the future, she *must* be wretched! Her only chance of contentment is, in being degraded to a mere animal state, eating, drinking, and basking in the sun."

We rose to go; the ladies crowding round, and pressing us not to leave so soon. Poor things! they are so greedy after a little amusement in their utter idleness. I felt more angry and impatient than you can well conceive, and kept exclaiming to Miss Barker, "Say we *must* go; let us get away directly; if we meet the Effendi returning, I shall certainly be taking off my slipper and beating him upon the

face in a most savage manner, or breaking his chibouque, or making him ‘eat dirt’ in some dreadful way or other, to my utter disgrace in Turkey and elsewhere.” So, with many civil speeches, they at last consented to allow us to depart.

Going up to the poor sorrowful lady, I said that I hoped to hear a good account of her. She was soon about to become again a mother. She smiled sadly, and shook her head. The Armenian ladies kissed her hand, and would have kissed the hem of her garment, but this she would not allow, and turned again to her child as we left the room. The rest of the ladies walked through the garden with us, plucking flowers, oranges, and lemons for every one until we were all laden. When we came to the hall belonging to the garden of the gentlemen’s apartments, the rest would have turned back; but the chief lady, peeping out first to see if the gardener or any other men were there, caught up the long trailing ends of her dress, and scampered at full speed along the gravel path after us, throwing at me a beautiful bunch of laburnum, which she pulled from a tree close by, then, laughing heartily, scampered as swiftly back again to the Harem garden-gate, and carefully closing the door we entered the narrow streets of Orta-kioy.

LETTER XII.

FAST OF RAMAZAN.—TURKISH NATIONALITY.—THE SHEIK-ZADI.—
END OF THE FAST.—PREPARATIONS.—ILLUMINATION OF THE
MOSQUES.—KARA-GÖZ, THE TURKISH ‘PUNCH.’—FIREMEN.

Constantinople, May 29th, 1856.

My dear Mr. Hornby,

I greatly regretted not being well enough to go to Stamboul, and see a night of the great Fast of Ramazan. During this Fast the poor Turks seem to suffer dreadfully, touching no food from sunrise to sunset. The other day, coming from Scutari with Mrs. Cumberbatch, our caiqueees were in an almost fainting state, and could hardly make way against the stream. They kept looking at the sun; and the moment the evening gun was fired, they seized a cucumber, and eagerly bit off two or three pieces of it. Of course the rich do not feel the fast so much, if at all; they merely turn night into day—sleeping all day, and feasting all night. Every mosque is illuminated two hours after sunset, and you hear

nothing but sounds of music and feasting from every Turkish house. We hear the Sultan's band begin about nine in the evening. The poor are in a dreadfully exhausted state, especially caïquejées and porters. Poor fellows ! you see them turn their heads away from the fountains, as they pass by in the burning sun ; for not even a drop of water must pass the lips of a good Mussulman from sunrise to sunset, and the working-classes here are wonderfully good and conscientious in doing that which they think right. The minarets were beautifully illuminated last night, with wreaths and sprays of lamps. An old Turk told us that they ought to be as brilliant every night of Ramazan and Bairam, but the priests (Imaums) steal the oil ! They are allowed by Government four hundred "okes" of oil for each mosque, and an "oke" is three pounds and a half English weight.

Colonel Ebor has written a graphic and charming account of the Ramazan, which I believe has appeared in print, but which I send, in case you have not seen it.

"The more the intercourse between the different nations exerts its assimilating influence, the more interesting become the remaining traces of a distinct national and social life. In Europe this assimilating tendency has spread so far that very little indeed remains ; and railways and steamers efface more and

more even the few traces which have been left hitherto, so that a man will soon be able to go from one end of Europe to the other without finding any difference in the appearance of the different countries.

"In Turkey this cosmopolitan tendency has not yet succeeded so completely. There is, indeed, a rage in Stamboul for everything which is *alla Franca*. The picturesque Oriental costume is more and more giving way to ugly straight-collared coats and broad-strapped trousers, the best specimens of which would disgrace even the shops of the Temple at Paris. The beautiful ceilings carved in wood are disappearing, in favour of wretchedly daubed flowers and trees; the comfortable divans running all round the walls, are replaced by straight-backed, uneasy chairs. But these innovations are scarcely known out of Stamboul, and even in the capital there is a time when a kind of reaction takes place against this tendency, and Oriental life seems to revive for a time. This time is that of the Ramazan, with its days of fasts and its nights of feasts. Then everybody returns to the old style of living; knives and forks, tables and chairs, plates and napkins are discarded, and all eat in the old patriarchal way, out of one dish, with their fingers. There are even people who abandon the raki bottle during that time, and go back again to the pure element. The mosques begin again to exert

their attractions ; and many a man you may see there, bowing down, who during eleven months of the year is making philosophical comments about the Koran.

“ This is therefore the most interesting time for a European, who can get, by a stroll through the streets, more insight into the character of Mohammedan life than by the study of volumes. Although the external appearance of the people has been changed, from what it was, when Turkish dignitaries rode about in colossal turbans and richly embroidered kaftans—when the only carriage seen was the gaudily-painted araba with milk-white oxen—when swaggering Janissaries and Spahis made themselves conspicuous—and when the old ruins through which you now walk were in their prime,—enough still remains to give the whole picture that strange mysterious colouring which we connect in our minds with the idea of the East.

“ The day begins for the Moslem, in Ramazan, two or three hours before sunset. There are, indeed, toiling wretches, such as hamals and caiquejees, for whom the day begins as usual, at daybreak, and grows only so much harder by the privations it imposes ; but most people do not get up before noon, and bazaars and shops kept by Mohammedans seldom open before the afternoon ; even the office hours at the Porte do not begin before that time.

"Two hours before sunset all the town turns out into the streets. It is the time for making purchases of provisions, and for promenading. There is a long, and in most parts tolerably wide, street leading from the place in which the mosque of Sultan Bajazid stands, to the mosque of Sultan Mehmed. This is the centre of all life. Originally a market, flanked on both sides with shops of every kind, it has in a great measure lost its original distinction. The shops have ceded their place to a nearly uninterrupted series of cafés, and the market is converted into a promenade. This is principally the case in the part of the street called Sheik-Zadi, from the beautiful mosque along which it leads. A double and often treble row of carriages, with dark-eyed and thickly-veiled beauties, occupies the centre of the street, while the raised arcades in front of the shops are filled with women in gay feridjees (cloaks) and admiring 'swells.' It is the Rotten-row of Stamboul, quite as characteristic, and even more picturesque, with its quaint balconies, graceful minarets, cypress-trees, and the shady little burial-grounds stuck among the houses, all illuminated by a gorgeous setting sun. This movement in the Sheik-Zadi lasts till near sunset: as the shadows grow longer, one carriage after the other loses itself, the yashmaks and their wearers disappear, and only the smoke-thirsty people remain

sitting on the little stools in front of the cafés, looking every minute at their watches, hating the sun, and preparing everything for the moment of the signal-gun. The water is boiling on the brazier, ready for the coffee, the tumblers are filled with lemonade or any other decoction, but the greatest care is given to the preparations for smoking. It is a work of love, and helps to idle away the last half-hour in pleasant anticipation of the coming pleasures. Every fibre is unravelled and put in with judgment ; steel, stone, and tinder are taken out ; and the most impatient amuse themselves with lighting the tinder and putting it out again half-a-dozen times.

"At length the last rays of the sun have disappeared, and the gun in the court of the Seraskeriate announces it ; a faint cry of satisfaction rises, drowned nearly as soon as it rises in a cloud of smoke or in a tumbler of water. As soon as their first cravings are satisfied, every one hastens to the 'iftar,' the first meal of the day. It is the only time when you can see the usually abstemious Oriental gorging himself. Sweets follow meat and meat follows sweets alternately in endless succession. All the innumerable resources of the Turkish cuisine, nearly superior in inventiveness to the French, are put into requisition, so that thirty to forty dishes are no uncommon occurrence at a fashionable house.

“There is scarcely time to swallow all these dainties, wash the hands, and smoke a pipe, when the sharp cry of the Muezzin calls the Faithful to night prayers. By this time the galleries on the mosques have been tastefully illuminated by lamps ; the rows of windows under the cupola shine with the lights of the thousand lamps inside. All the cafés, grocers’ shops, and eating-houses, all the numerous stands, with ices, lemonade, and sweetmeats, and the thousands of paper lanterns of the thousands of the crowd, with their numberless lights, lend to the whole scene a fantastic glare which surpasses the last and most exciting moment of the Roman Carnival.

“This is the hour when one ought to go and see the mosques. The simple grandeur of some of these masterpieces of Eastern architecture is only to be felt, not to be described. That solemn abstraction from all surrounding earthly objects which characterizes the prayer of the Moslem, rises to a kind of stern enthusiasm which strikes even the most sceptical with awe.

“By the time prayer is over, the scene outside has even increased in animation. Everybody is visiting everybody ; the crowd is so dense that you can scarcely pass through the main thoroughfares ; all the seats in front of the cafés and shops are occupied, everywhere you hear chanting, singing, and music. The

mosques have increased in light. On a rope stretched from one minaret to another, figures formed of ingeniously hung lamps, representing flowers, animals, birds, ships, and other objects, swing about high in the air. A thousand "Buyouroun," ("Please") invite the passers-by to the shops, and mix with the hum of the busy crowd. And all this host, without anybody to direct its movements, is orderly and quiet; no pressing or jostling, no acute noise or excess. This is, perhaps, the most wonderful part of the whole, and gives to the scene an air of mystery, which impresses you almost with the belief that you are witnessing the thousand and second of the 'Arabian Nights.'

"If you have no acquaintances to go to, and if you are tired of the crowd, you may go and see the Kara-göz, the Turkish 'Punch.' He haunts mostly out-of-the-way lanes, and chooses invariably for his exhibition one of the numerous gardens with which the town abounds. You enter the little door, and are received, as in exhibitions all over the world, by the proprietor, who acts at the same time as the cashier, with the polite demand for a few piastres. If you have thus acquired the right to enter, you must look out for a seat; and, according to the confidence in your generosity which your appearance inspires, you will be accommodated with a wooden sofa, a chair, or

stool, or you will be banished among the crowd in the background, where you are at liberty to squat down. Most of the gardens where Kara-göz exhibits are covered in by trellises, on which the vines creep along, letting their untrained branches hang down, through which you can see the stars. A solitary lamp, or at most two, form the illumination, except where Kara-göz, the wag, appears. Here a dark curtain is drawn across, except in the centre, where a thin transparent veil shows the scene.

"The performance is acted by marionettes of wood, some of them rather cleverly jointed, so as to enjoy the liberty of all their members. Here, as in Italy, there are stereotype figures,—Kara-göz, his friend and rival in wit, Hadji-Vatt, a 'swell,' *the woman*, a Jew, an idiot, a Persian, and the police. The subjects are most varied, but all representing tricks played by Kara-göz on all the *dramatis personæ*, who all rise at last against the wag. The most interesting part, for any one who understands the language, is the dialogue, especially between Hadji-Vatt and Kara-göz, who try to surpass each other in the skirmish of words. Some of them are exceedingly witty, and, what is more, the wit is fully appreciated by the spectators.

"Scarcely less interesting than the performance, are the faces of the spectators. The first row are all

children, and never did I hear childish delight and ringing laughter so joyous and free. One could scarcely imagine that those grave persons behind had been likewise once sitting in front. But even these latter did not resist a well-turned *jeu de mots*, in which the whole performance abounds. In general, one would scarcely believe what a fund of fun there is in the grave Osmanli, and how sensible he is of the ludicrous.

"By the time the performance is over, the crowd begins to disperse in the streets, and is wandering home, to wait for the drum which beats two hours before the morning-gun, for the second meal. Now the bye-streets, which have had hitherto a deserted appearance, dark and solitary, begin to get their part of the movement, although the want of illumination and the absence of open shops always make a great difference. Indeed, a lover of contrasts could not do better than take a stroll in the by-streets after having walked about for some time in the thoroughfares,—it is like life and death; here and there a solitary wayfarer, or a mysterious lady with a servant carrying a lantern before her, or a sleepy dog, who will rather be trodden upon than move out of the way, is all he will meet. Yet it may happen to him, as it did last time to me, that, as if by a magic stroke, the whole street becomes alive.

We have first a dull trampling sound from afar, as if a body of troops were moving in a run. It becomes more and more distinct. The sound of the steps is intermingled with shouting and yelling; at last a lantern appears, and behind it fifty or sixty men, running along at a wonderfully measured but quiet step, and going over everything which comes into their way. In the midst of them you perceive a dark object, with brass mountings glittering in the dim light of the Fanar. They are the firemen, with their portable engine, the only one applicable in the narrow streets. All the houses begin to get animated, doors are unlocked, windows opened, and everybody inquires where the fire is. When the host of firemen have passed like a wild chase, and inquiry shows that the fire is far off, everything sinks again into silence and solitude.

“An hour before sunrise the morning-gun puts an end to the feasting, and everybody turns in. Not less interesting than at night, is Stamboul early in the morning, in Ramazan—a city of the dead by daylight. If you lose yourself in the interim, you may go about for half-an-hour without meeting a soul,—a strange sight for any one who knows Stamboul in the morning at other times, for its population are generally very early risers.”

LETTER XIII.

CELEBRATION OF THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY.—THE FÊTE-DIEU.—ILLUMINATIONS.—‘THE NIGHT OF DESTINY.’—THE SULTAN'S VISIT TO THE MOSQUE OF TOPHANA.—NIGHT OF PRAYER.—PRINCE MURAD.

Constantinople, May 30th, 1856.

My dear Mr. Hornby,

We are looking forward with some anxiety to Tuesday's Mail, not having heard from any of you by the last. Two or three copies of the ‘Times’ have arrived from you at irregular intervals, but evidently having been opened and kept a considerable time by some one here; so pray do not send any others through the Post-office, for papers are in such request just now, that there is the merest chance of their coming safe to hand.

The weather here continues most lovely, very hot in the sun, but always with a fresh breeze, so that in doors it is quite cool. The Queen's birthday was splendidly celebrated on Thursday. I took caique to see the shipping dressed with innumerable flags. The

French and English men-of-war looked magnificent, and while the salvos of artillery were firing, one might almost imagine an action was being fought. Lord Stratford held a levée at noon, attended by the French Ambassador, the whole *corps diplomatique*, and a great number of English officers. The court-yard of the palace was lined with a detachment of Guards and Highlanders, and the fine band of the German Jägers played a choice selection of airs. At the grand dinner in the evening, the only toast was, "Her Majesty!" when the discharge of three rockets from the illuminated palace was answered by a tremendous salute from the 'Queen.'

In the evening hundreds of ships were illuminated. At nine o'clock, I heard the guns plainly down here; and the tremendous cheers of the sailors were carried from ship to ship, it is said, quite up to the Black Sea. I thought how pleased her Majesty would have been, could she have witnessed such demonstrations of hearty affection. I plainly heard the band of the German Legion encamped at Kulalee, opposite, playing the anthem; and Herbert Siborne's men had an immense bonfire, which lighted up the hills far and wide. It was a beautiful sight from our windows, for the minarets and principal Turkish palaces on the shore were also illuminated for Ramazan. Edmund was at the Ambassador's dinner,

and I amused myself at my old seat on the divan, watching all that was going on. They say that Pera had never before seen so gay and splendid a day. The French celebrated the *Fête-Dieu* in the Embassy Church of St. Louis ; the palace-yard was tastefully decorated with the flags of the Allies, and a guard of French soldiers was at the door, and lined the walls of the church. Later in the day, all the world was struggling to see the Sultan distribute the medals for the campaign of Roumelia, which took place in the courtyard of the Seraskeriate, or War-office. It is said that there is to be a special decoration for the defence of Silistria,—of course one for the Crimea.

Friday was a grand night on the Bosphorus, after the numerous fêtes on shore. It was the twenty-seventh of the fast of Ramazan, or Night of Destiny to all true Believers; and, according to ancient custom, the Sultan went in his state caique to the Mosque of Tophana, to offer up the prayer of night. On account of the Peace, the illuminations and fireworks were more splendid than usual. We were on board Mr. Whittle's steam-yacht, and had a perfect view of the "seven" glistening hills of light, rising out of the most fantastic-looking sea you can conceive;—here was a huge, phantom-looking ship, marked out in living fire,—there, the dark-flowing

stream ; then a man-of-war, one blaze of lamps, and throwing up rockets every now and then, which were beautifully reflected on the waves. Bordering the shore, were moored countless caïques, awaiting the Sultan’s approach in profound silence, some filled with veiled Turkish women of the poorer class,—all with varied and attentive groups, looking still more picturesque by that strange and dreamy light. This deep silence lasted for a long time, and people seemed to sit in a kind of delighted reverie, gazing far down to the illuminated masts in the Golden Horn ; then back to the glittering Port ; high above, to Santa Sophia, appearing still more like enchantment among the dark cypresses ; and then on the Mosque of Tophana, on the shore, where the Sultan was to pray, and where, between the two fire-wreathed minarets, his cipher hung suspended high in air, in lamps of pale and gleaming gold.

Beneath this, in the Court of Tophana, were piled heaps of cannon-balls,—trophies from the Crimea,—which were converted into pyramids of light, by lamps skilfully placed amongst them. The guard-house was covered with warlike designs, every mosque with mystic ones. It was a beautiful sight. The Sultan came down about nine o’clock. The moment he left his palace, a signal was given, and every one in the row of boats lighted up flambeaux, in the

glare of which came, swiftly gliding on, the white-doved, and the rest of the graceful royal caiques. Every English and French man-of-war burned blue and red lights; every public building burst out into a blaze; and every person in the splendid procession could be seen with perfect distinctness, the Sultan's magnificent boatmen being certainly the most conspicuous. After the Sultan has passed to prayer, all is silent and dark again, except for the illuminations; the torches are extinguished, or burnt out. It was as if the city and the sea lay under some spell of enchantment. All the Turks no doubt were engaged in earnest prayer, for this is the night in which their destinies are determined for the whole year to come. Captain Hamilton kindly took myself and some other ladies on shore. We stepped quietly into a man-of-war's boat, and soon landed, among countless crowds of caiques, at the stairs of Tophana. The court was filled with most extraordinary illuminations—large trees bearing fruit and flowers, in coloured lamps—exactly like the garden of Aladdin. Beyond, among the trees, were telekis filled with veiled Turkish ladies, attended by their slaves, all silent as the crowds around; even among the dense masses of soldiers, through which we passed in this enchanted garden, not the slightest sound was heard: all were sunk in deep and dreamlike prayer of

Kader Gnedessi, beneath millions of twinkling lamps. About midnight the vast crowd stirred ; the Sultan's prayer was over, which was announced by some huge rockets sent high into the air, and scattering about thousands of many-coloured stars. The 'Mellampus,' and all the ships of war, burst into a sea of light, as the Sultan stepped into his caïque on his return to the Palace,—each tiny caïque, and even Greek and stranger barques, burning their dazzling torches. The fine figures of the caïquejées, standing up in the glare, and holding them out to illuminate the royal way,—the veiled boat-loads of women and sailor groups behind, thrown into deep shadow,—had the finest effect in the dark and shining water. After the Sultan had passed by, the crowds sank down again, and the grand display of fireworks commenced, which is his yearly treat to his people.

The yacht in which we were was fancifully and brilliantly illuminated, and the Sultan's eldest son, Prince Murad, came on board, with his tutor, to see it. He is a tall, pale youth, of about seventeen, with a broad, expressionless face, and large wandering eyes. He asked, through his tutor, that we might be presented to him, and looked very shy and uncomfortable when we were. I said, pitying his nervousness, "Pray say to his Highness that I am happy to have the honour of seeing him." His

Highness replied, "Tell her that I am very happy to see *her*." Then I begged the Effendi to say how charmed I had been with the beautiful scene on the Bosphorus that night. "Tell her that I am very glad she liked it," finished our conversation. I retreated on deck, and the Prince looked with an air of relief at the embroidered sofa-cushions, evidently thinking Europeans and European manners very formidable, and congratulating himself on having safely got over an introduction to an unveiled woman. I think I have now almost exhausted my stock of Turkish news, my dear Mr. Hornby; except that there is a report of Omar Pasha's being made chief of a military police at Constantinople, which most people think would be a dangerous appointment for the Sultan—in fact, a second edition of the Janissaries—as he has immense influence over the wild soldiers he commands. The Bashi-Bazouks and the Sultan's Cossacks are said to be in almost open rebellion against the Turkish Government. Since they have been paid regularly, and fed and commanded by English officers, they have been so happy, that they now refuse to return to their former miserable state; no one knows what is to be done with them. Very much I pity the poor Sultan. On Friday he was to have read the Hatti Sheriff to several regiments of his soldiers, but did not do so, and it was

said he was advised that it was not safe. However, this is but an *on dit* of a place famous for very absurd ones, and I should think such a thing as reading a proclamation very un-Sultan like. Stories of approaching rebellion everywhere—risings of the Greeks, and afterwards the massacre of all Christians by the Turks, the moment our army is gone,—are all the fashion here just now, but they do not trouble us much.

LETTER XIV.

A SAIL ON THE BOSPHORUS.—THE ‘BELLE POULE.’—STRAWBERRY-GARDENS.—LAST DAY OF RAMAZAN.

Orta-kioy, June 3rd, 1856.

My dear Mother,

I AM sorry that you had no letter from me by the last Mail. Mrs. Brett persuaded me to stay with her at Therapia until the evening, and as the Ambassador is not there, there is no mail-bag. I enjoyed my visit to Therapia extremely; the sea was rough, and the cool breeze very refreshing. All the gentlemen whom the Admiral chooses to invite, go up to Pera in the morning in his steamer, which has a curious look waiting almost close to the door of the hotel: the ladies amuse themselves as well as they can. Mrs. Brett and I had a sail on the Bosphorus yesterday with a pleasant party. We all landed on the other shore, taking a long ramble in the Sultan’s Valley, and then to the deserted kiosk beyond, where the

view is very beautiful, and pretty tortoises are to be found.

The 'Belle Poule' is lying off Beicos Bay, among many other ships. She is painted black still, and has been since the time when she brought the body of Napoleon home from St. Helena. After our sail, we walked in the garden of the French Embassy, the hills and the blue sea peeping in through waving boughs ; and then, in the pleasant winding shrubbery paths, we talked over a visit to the Forest of Belgrade, and to the old fountain, and Lady Mary Wortley Montague's house near it. However, the weather is too warm inland to make any expedition now, so I must come up from the Islands early some morning. We are just off to a cottage there belonging to a Greek named Giacomo, and Giacomo's Cavass is come with a large island caique, to remove our goods and chattels ; and the hamals are come, stalking up the stairs ; and the Apple-blossom, and Vassili, and our Sais are chattering in Greek and Turkish, as if the tongues of Babel were let loose ; so I think it is time for me to say good-bye.

June 5th.

How I wish you were here, among other pleasant outdoor wanderings, to regale yourself with the delicious strawberries of our village, which are now in

perfection. Parties of Greeks and Turks are constantly visiting the cool strawberry-gardens, spreading their shawls and cushions in the shade, and enjoying the fruit and the view at the same time. With very little cultivation, the plants produce wonderfully. Hundreds of baskets are sent in to Constantinople, besides those which are discussed here *al fresco*. The baskets are of a very pretty shape, round and deep, with a good stout handle, and holding five or six of what we call “pottles” in England. We get a magnificent dish for three piastres (six-pence), and no doubt they are cheaper to the natives. It is a pretty sight to see the baskets going into Constantinople, strung on a long pole, with a Greek in picturesque costume at each end. Everything is a picture here.

Yesterday was the last of Ramazan, and the Sultan went in procession to the old palace at Seraglio Point, to take the yearly Ottoman oaths of empire. Cannon thundered, drums rolled, and streets and windows were crowded, to see the procession. The minarets were beautifully illuminated last night, with wreaths of pale gold lamps, and words strung from one minaret to another, on this and the opposite shore ; last night it was “*Marshalla*,”—*i. e.* ‘God bless you,’ in Turkish. The effect is wonderful, and the golden words appear to hang suspended in the air ;

in fact this place is more like a dream than reality just now. All night the roll of little drums is heard on the hills and in the villages, for it is also a Greek festival. The streets are crowded, and gay parties constantly moving about on the water. The poor here seem to have as greatly too much outdoor amusement, as the English have too little.

LETTER XV.

END OF RAMAZAN.—ILLUMINATIONS.—NIGHT.—PALACES ON THE BOSPHORUS.—FEAST OF BAIRAM.—TORCHLIGHT PROCESSION OF THE SULTAN.—CEREMONY IN THE MOSQUE OF TOPHANA.

Constantinople, June 7th, 1856.

My dear Mrs. Austin,

TUESDAY the 4th was the last day of the Ramazan, and as the rays of the setting sun disappeared from valley and mountain, the roar of cannon from "Ramis-Tchiflik" announced that all true Believers might eat again in daylight. It is said that an Imaum is stationed on Mount Olympus to catch the first glimpse of the new moon of the month *Chevale*, from which dates the Mussulman new year; and at his signal from afar, carried from minaret to minaret, the spell of this long and weary Fast is broken, as it were by enchantment, by the sound of the announcing cannon; and coffee-bearers and sherbet-bearers and pipe-bearers minister to the longing and famished multitudes of Constantinople,—to the rich man who has been

dozing or wearily counting his beads all day, and to the poor hamal and caïquejee half-fainting with hunger and fatigue. Before eating, a good Osmanli washes, prays, gravely smokes a chibouque, and sips a cup of coffee: after these ceremonies, he feasts in right earnest.

Two hours after sunset the cannons fire again, for joy that the Fast is ended. Drums roll, fifes are heard on the hills and in the valleys, muskets are let off every now and then, and splendid rockets are thrown high up in the air, which have a beautiful effect, bursting over the dark water or above darker cypress-trees. By the time that the summer's night has fairly set in, the Imaums have finished their work, and

“ Millions of lamps proclaim the feast
Of Bairam through the boundless East.”

As every one says, it is impossible to give an idea of the marvellous beauty of these illuminations. Hour after hour I have sat at the window spell-bound, and with the idea of enchantment constantly creeping over me. The lamps are of a pale gold-colour, clustered, thick as bees, round each balcony of the high white minarets; and fantastic devices are hung from one minaret to another, which, in the soft grey light of the summer night,

“ Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid.”

I have often thought of those lines of Tennyson's during the lovely nights of Ramazan.

The opposite mosque of Begler Bey, on the Asian side, was an exquisite object from hence. Far over the dark waters beneath was reflected a golden cascade of light, with shades of purple waves amid its sprays, ever shifting and moving in the stream : it was just like the Fountain of Golden Water of the Arabian Nights, only I saw it while quietly resting on a soft divan, and without taking the journey up the enchanted mountain in search of the charmed phial. But these Asian hills looked enchanted on the last night of Ramazan : far as the eye could reach glittered bright lights, some moving, some stationary, some by darkest cypress-woods, some where I knew stood solitary and latticed houses. The water's edge was fringed with pale and glistening gold ; for at the gateways of all these silent, dreamy palaces of the Bosphorus, shone stars, and trees, and often the Sultan's name, wreathed on shore, but sparkling as brightly on the waves. The Imaum chanted to prayer about an hour before midnight, and the deep, full, prolonged notes quite filled the valley. Every sound in this lovely scene seemed as strange to me as its sights.

At last, half bewildered and half as if in a dream, I looked up at the moon, and the sight of her was

pleasant enough ; for she is always the same in every land, fair, serene, and kind, and always looks like home. The nightingales were singing in every cypress near. It is quite true what Byron says, and here, in summer-time,

“The voice of the nightingale never is mute.”

Her sweet notes, and the moon’s soft and tranquil beauty, were very composing after the fantastic and bewildering sights of this Eastern night’s *fête*. The Turkish drums were rolling long after midnight, but I did not wait to see the lamps die out.

So closed to me the last night of the Mussulman Old Year. Before daybreak next morning, cannon announced the Feast of Bairam, or the New Year ; and presently we heard the heavy tramp of a large body of troops marching into Constantinople. It was a strange scene, the glare of their torches mingling with the grey light of morning, and shining on their arms and accoutrements. They were going to line the streets through which the Sultan was to pass on his way to mosque, as first Imaum, or priest of Islamism, which ceremony he always performs, as head of Church and State, on the first day of the New Year, at daybreak. I was very sorry not to have gone, but seeing the fireworks on the 27th day of Ramazan, when the Sultan goes to mosque by torchlight, had so exhausted me, that I did not think it prudent to

take a row in the mist at three o'clock in the morning so soon afterwards. The Sultan's ladies all went in telekis, and by torchlight; by which, I was told that the motley crowd of soldiers, fakirs, Armenians, Turks, Arabs, and black slaves, looked most picturesque and striking. All the Pashas attended in gorgeous array; the Sultan was of course splendidly mounted; and they went to the Mosque of Tophana, where, it is said, the Sultan reads aloud the laws of the Prophet, and swears to govern by them. We knew when this ceremony was over, because our poor little kiosk trembled visibly at the roar of cannon which follows it. The Sultan afterwards held a levee, in the open air, at Seraglio Point, when the Pashas swear homage, and are permitted to kiss the hem of his garment, or rather two embroidered strips of cloth, several yards long, which are attached to either side of his chair of state. This is an old ceremony of their camp-life, which I should much like to have seen; but another is performed at the "Courbam Bairam," at the end of the month, and of this I hope to give you an account. These customs, it is affirmed, have been observed by the Osmanlis since the time of Abraham.

But I must say adieu, for we are going to the Sweet Waters of Europe. It is a great day there,—the Turkish Sunday, and the last day of Bairam.

All the Faithful are in the highest spirits; drums and fifes resound in every valley; the Bosphorus is covered with gay caïques; every Turk sports his best garments, and forgives his enemies, and makes presents to his wives, children, and slaves; for these three days of his New Year are feast-days; all his sins have been forgiven him for the Fast of Rama-zan, and he is on excellent terms with the Prophet, and with himself, and with his beautiful Bosphorus. So the Sweet Waters will be gay indeed today, for it is also a Greek holiday. Adieu, my dear Mrs. Austin! I will write again tomorrow of what we see in the Valley.

LETTER XVI.

A STROLL.—THE BOSPHORUS.—TURKISH ARSENAL.—SUBURBS OF CONSTANTINOPLE.—POVERTY IN THE EAST.—KIOSKS.—STORKS.—TURKISH AND GREEK DRESSES.—SCENES ON THE RIVER.—THE SWEET WATERS.—SCENES ON SHORE.—THE SULTAN'S KIOSK.—THE SULTANA AND HER DAUGHTER.—EVENING SCENE.—RETURN FROM THE SWEET WATERS.

Orta-kioy, June 8th, 1856.

My dear Mrs. Austin,

IT was very sultry yesterday, so I put on my coolest muslin dress and my wide straw hat, and, with the Armenian girl Dhudu and my cousin Henry, strolled slowly through the village in search of a caique to take us to the Sweet Waters of Europe, whither all the world had gone hours before. We scarcely met a soul in the usually crowded narrow streets. All were holiday-making in the shade, whither the noisy street-commerce had also followed. Only a few Greek beggars, and the surly scavenger-dogs, dozed, or quarrelled in groups here and there, on the loose pavement-stones of the wayside. Even

the little *café*, usually crammed with noisy, laughing Greeks, was almost deserted today, and many a bright nargileh stood neglected on the clean and polished table. We found our two favourite caiquejees fast asleep in their boat, which was moored in the shade beside the mosque. Vassili soon roused them up. They took the handsome boat-cushions from under the linen covering, made the caique comfortable, greased the leather thong of their oars, and out we dashed, through ships unloading cattle from Varna, on to the middle of the Bosphorus. Our white umbrellas sheltered us effectually from the sun, and we had the usual delicious breeze. It was delightful sitting still; but large, round drops soon fell in showers down the bronzed faces of the rowers, who merely shook them off, like a Newfoundland dog when he gets out of the water, and dashed on in splendid style under this burning sun, with nothing but a thin white jacket and a light fez to protect them from its scorching rays. We met but few caiques; all were gone to the Sweet Waters, either on the Asian or European side. The flags of the English and French men-of-war at Stamboul scarcely stirred; all was quiet, sultry heat. The very tar seemed blistering on the sides of the vessels, and not a soul was to be seen, even on board the French frigates, where all is generally stir, and music, and life.

The Bosphorus was of the loveliest blue, and the sky only just a little paler with the lightest “fleck” of white cloud every here and there, borne by the south wind from Mount Olympus. It was very lovely ; for, in the midst of this gorgeous Eastern-summer’s scene,—from trees and flowering shrubs in their freshest, fullest beauty, rising out of the waters at Stamboul,—you had but to turn your eyes to the left, past the Maiden’s Tower and the shadowy Princes’ Islands in the Sea of Marmora, to behold distant mountains glittering in snow, reposing in their cold and solitary grandeur, as if disdaining the gay summer and leaves and flowers of the lower world. This place is like a beautiful dream ; but we were soon gone from it, and had passed under the Bridge of Boats, and arrived at another, so like the Chinese representation on plates, that I almost expected to see “Sing-sing’s” parasol peeping over it. Presently we came to a Turkish arsenal, and noticed an immense ship with its huge skeleton just completed. Before the arsenal lay four or five Turkish men-of-war (three-deckers), in one of which we counted a hundred and thirty guns. They were dressed with flags, from the top-mast down to the very water’s edge, in honour of the Bairam, and made a splendid appearance : except for the huge gilt lion at their prows, I should not have known but that they

were English ships, though perhaps a sailor might. Mehemet Ali, the Sultan's brother-in-law and Capitan Pasha, was going on board one of them ; his boats were also gaily dressed with flags and awnings, and the Turkish frigates had bands of music on board. I could not help shuddering, as I looked on the standard of the Crescent and Star, now waving quietly over the water, and wondered if any of these ships had been at the massacre of Scio, when the Turks so mercilessly put all those unfortunate Greeks to the sword : one hears such frightful accounts of that barbarous affair still, from the Greeks, who have never forgotten or forgiven it.

After passing the last bridge, we had an excellent view of the suburbs, and the poorest part of Constantinople, with here and there a ruined square tower, or piece of ivied brickwork of the old Roman Wall, peeping out from tumble-down wooden houses, which could only be inhabited by the very poorest of the poor, and look as if the first rough wave would wash the wretched tenement away. Many of the supports and rafters have really crumbled and broken away, leaving only a few rotten boards between the happy "tenant" and the Bosphorus. A few miserable donkeys were standing patiently on the shore, laden with stones, just brought in by a large Greek boat, whose bowsprit was knocking in a

friendly way at a frail little casement, and playfully threatening to demolish it altogether. I wish Preziosa would take some sketches of the Turkish poor and their habitations. Though miserable enough, I must say there is nothing so frightful in their poverty as in ours. Street vice of every kind is a thing almost unknown here, except at Pera, and that which is caused by Europeans.

Poverty here is respectable, in every sense of the word. A hamal's bride is like Cæsar's wife, free from all reproach, though dining upon an artichoke and a piece of brown bread; she is stately and veiled, could not be noisy, and never hangs out clothes; but half starves magnificently on a little old divan, with a fox-skin to represent costly furs, and a dearly cherished chibouque as a consoler for every sorrow, at which she puffs away with the air of a princess. Poverty does not seem to degrade or vulgarize in the East; its very rags are worn so royally, that one no longer wonders at King Cophetua, who says,—

“This beggar-girl shall be my bride.”

She would ascend the throne with the same native grace, as that with which she a moment before accepted a para, or asked for a piece of brown bread in the name of the Prophet. But I shall never get to the Sweet Waters if I linger so by the way.

We are now rowing up a narrow creek of the

Bosphorus with the environs of Pera on the right, and of Stamboul on the left. What a vast city is Constantinople! it is wonderful to think how people manage to find their way among the distant and secluded parts of it, lying in dense masses as it does, without positive streets, and without any name or direction shewn on any part of it. The Stamboul suburbs seem very pretty, the dark-red masses of houses relieved here and there by green trees, which have sprung up in large spaces made by fires long ago, and by ruined walls covered with creepers of the most luxuriant kinds, especially the Virginian. We passed the great fez-manufactory, which belongs to the Sultan, and brings him in a large revenue, being a royal monopoly. His Majesty has a beautiful kiosk, or summer-palace, close to it, with a mosque and shady garden adjoining; making about the hundredth he has on the Bosphorus. The windows of the harem part were not latticed, but a high white railing, built far out in the water, prevents all prying caiques from going near enough to tell a yashmak from a feridjee. In the shallow water, near the railings, grew a large tuft of tall waterflags, and near it was a magnificent pair of storks, the first I have seen here. One of them was standing perfectly still, as if admiring her snowy plumage and bright-red legs in the water; the other was fishing

at a little distance very adroitly, wading about, and every now and then swallowing a glittering fish with evident satisfaction. Our caiquejees treated them with great respect, and told me they were very good birds,—“Chok izi kùsh.” We were much amused all the way, learning Turkish words of our caiquejees: they told us the Turkish names of different things which we passed, and we returned the compliment by instructing them in the English, each party repeating the word or sentence over and over again. Nothing can equal the good-humour and good breeding of these fine fellows.

But now the creek has become much narrower,—about the breadth of the Thames at Weybridge,—and we are far from palaces and minarets and Roman walls, and far from tumble-down houses and arsenal stores. We have left the seven-hilled city behind, and are rowing up a valley surrounded with green slopes and mountainous hills. Our caiquejees tell us that this valley and these fine hills belong to the Sultan, who has a kiosk higher up; but this we had divined, for magnificent trees begin to appear, which only adorn the land about Constantinople when it belongs to the Sultan or some great Pasha—to make their Paradise perfect. But now, borne on the soft breeze over the scented water-flags, come distant sounds of revelry.

This delicious shade from overhanging trees, and the pleasant sound of our oars in the dark-green water, with the glimpse here and there of a gay caique moored against the sedgy banks, bring pleasant thoughts of the “lotus-eaters,” and many a dreamy Eastern fancy, as we lean back in the caique, and wish every one we love was with us. But as we speed on, the crowd of caiques becomes thick, and our dreams are chased away as we look about and admire the various occupants, and by the more prudential care of minding that wild young Greeks do not dart the sharp prow of their boat right through your new straw bonnet or the back of your head.

Another turn in the river, and the most beautiful, the most brilliantly coloured and varied scene was before us. Fancy an Italian villa in a richly ornamented style, mingling its shadows in the water with the high trees surrounding it, the blue sky peeping in above, and a distracting glance of rose and orange gardens on either side, in which Turkish ladies, veiled and splendidly attired, are walking slowly about, or reclining on cushions in the shade. Fancy knowing that one of these, and the fairest, is the Sultan’s daughter, and the rest her ladies, enjoying the Bai-ram, in this happy valley, for the day. Fancy opposite the windows of the palace, floating idly, her oars at rest, a huge caique, gilt and flowered at prow and

stern, and filled with picturesque Greeks in bright holiday attire. The women have stuck roses and lilies into the embroidered handkerchiefs wreathed round their heads. The men's jackets are resplendent with gold and scarlet and green. Three boys in the stern play on a kind of guitar, and a rude drum made out of an earthenware water-vase. They are all laughing in the wildest mirth, taking up the song one after another.

Fancy, in contrast to this, a Turkish boat, stealing noiselessly along, filled with veiled and silent women, and carefully guarded by hideous and ferocious Blacks. In the middle of this boat stands up a lovely Turkish child, about five years old. She must be a Pasha's daughter, for down the front of her velvet and embroidered cap is a badge of brilliants, with a large emerald in the centre. Her dress is a jacket and trousers, of that soft green satin of which the feridjees are made; and round her waist the dear little beauty wears a belt of gold embroidery with a jewelled clasp. She is pointing to a most singular group. About twenty huge musk-oxen have waded into the water, and their hideous, black, flat heads, and crooked horns, look so strange among the sparkling waves, and in the midst of this brilliant scene. It must be very sultry, for they will not move, even for the raps which they get from numerous oars in passing

by, but their large black eyes glitter with pleasure and enjoyment. No doubt they have brought to the Sweet Waters many a weighty load of Turkish beauty, in their crimson and gold-canopied waggons, and are now reposing, in luxurious Asiatic abandonment, after the heat and labour of the day.

I was thinking what a gorgeous picture of Eastern life this group before the kiosk would be, when the rapid approach of a splendid Tunisian boat obliged our caïque to dart rapidly on, in order to make way. Seated under a richly fringed white and scarlet canopy were two Tunisian officers, in full costume, and with military Orders on their breasts. Noble, swarthy-looking men they were, and would have made excellent “fancy portraits” of Saladin or Osman, or any other famed Eastern warrior of olden times. Their boat, painted in stripes of white and green, was rowed by sixteen men in flowing white robes, with an under-vest of scarlet showing down the breast. Two soldiers, bristling with splendid arms *à la* Bashi-Bazouk, sat in the stern. Of course all wore the scarlet fez, with its rich purple tassel. Their gay standard flutters proudly in the breeze: they make a dazzling appearance, and you fancy that they must be going to pay a visit to the Caliph Haroun Alraschid.

But now the river has become so crowded, that it

is with the greatest difficulty we can get on. The caïques are so thick that it is only possible for our men to pull a few strokes every now and then. There is an immense amount of shouting, in Greek and Turkish, especially at antique-looking Greek boats with fringed and beaded prows; for the revellers in them are singing, and drumming, and shouting, in the wildest manner, allowing themselves to float as chance may direct, and not troubling themselves to get out of anybody's way,—much to the disgust of the majestic Turks, who float by, with their calm and dignified aspect, looking neither to the right nor to the left.

The banks meanwhile are most lovely to look on. Your eye is charmed, delighted, and contented, for there is nothing to wish for, nothing to imagine: it is a full, complete, and harmonious picture. Here and there guitars hang on the trees. Group after group, in the most splendid and varied costumes, are seated under the dark plane-trees, from their deepest shade down to the gay and sparkling water's edge, where a beauty in snow-white veil, and shining lilac feridjee trimmed with silver, is laughing with a lovely child and her black attendants, who are carrying embroidered cushions from the quietly moored caïque. Every turn on the river brings you upon different groups on either side, the last appearing more striking than the first.

By the landing-place the banks were literally lined with Turkish women in white veils, and feridjees of every possible brilliant or delicate colour, from blue, trimmed with rose-colour, and cherry trimmed with silver, to delicate apple-green and the palest straw-colour. The dark-brown and dark-green feridjees of the slaves, or the poorer women, prevent one's eye from being wearied with too much brilliancy. It is perfect, and you are delighted even with the rude Greek songs and their wiry-sounding guitars.

The Greeks kept mostly on the left bank of the river,—of course men and women together; but no Turk of any rank is ever seen with his womankind; the women sit or walk in groups with their children and slaves, and laugh and eat, and enjoy a summer's day like a bird or a fish. They have little to prize but the hour, poor things! so they may as well be happy while they can, until their beauty is gone, and they are less esteemed than the ox which carries them.

At last we are on shore, and mark well the spot by an old willow-tree and a few rough planks where our caique is safely moored. One of our caiquejees, mounting a pair of coarse knitted socks and an old pair of red canoe-like shoes, follows us with camp-chairs and white umbrellas. We are on the edge of a wide plain, over which English officers are galloping, with every here and there a Turkish Lancer, and

a couple of wild Greeks dashing recklessly along, determined to win the race for the honour of the new scarlet and gold jacket, and because a splendidly-mounted French officer is looking quietly on. The sun is excessively sultry on the plain, and the arabas make a great dust; so we dart under the shade of the trees by the water's edge, and admire the nice contrivance of a Turk for the distribution of really cool sherbet and lemonade to the multitude. His emporium is in the shape of a gigantic canvas umbrella. You look at it with respect, for it might have belonged to Jack's vastest giant. It is covered with fresh green boughs, which cast a pleasant shadow over the little table underneath, delicately adorned with a white cloth, and graced with three enormous decanters of sherbet, each stopped with an immense lemon. There is a great crowd here, and our Turk, in his blue and white turban, looks contentedly on his heap of piastres.

His next-door neighbour is a Greek, who has very cleverly made a rude kind of altar out of clay. On this some charcoal is burning. Little white and gold cups are in a basket by his side. There are a few rough stools around him, just in the shade. This is a *café*; and the Greeks, Armenians, English, French, Circassians, Arabs, Blacks, Croats, and Persians of this motley throng stop, as they stroll by, to

take a fragrant cup, or to rest awhile on the little wooden stools under the tree. The gaily dressed Greek strawberry-sellers look very picturesque, carrying the pretty baskets of fruit on long poles from shoulder to shoulder, stopping at the doors of arabas by the wayside, and then darting off to distant parties of revellers, whence still come sounds of laughter, and of guitars, and of little drums.

We still press on through the crowd, past sellers of many-coloured sweetmeats, of *yahoort* (a kind of sour milk, white as snow) and of *seemeet*, bread sprinkled with small seed, and hanging in tempting brown wreaths round a basket. A magnificent old Turk is selling kabobs (small pieces of meat strung and roasted on sticks), which are kept hot by a little iron machine turning round a charcoal fire. A large wild dog, with a strong infusion of wolf about him, sits at a little distance sniffing the savoury smell, but that is all the poor wanderer seems likely to get for his pains.

We amused ourselves by watching the crowds for some time, and then walked on to get a peep at the Sultan's kiosk. It seemed in bad repair, for I believe he seldom goes there, but the trees around it were magnificent, and we heard nightingales singing in the deepest shade. The very luxury of neglect seemed delicious on this sultry day, and peeps of

distant grass-grown walks and sedgy fountains were charming. At the gate of the kiosk stood, or rather lolled, a depressed-looking Turkish soldier, holding his musket all on one side (as they always do), and when bored tossing it about as a schoolgirl does her parasol.

The gateway looked down a fine avenue of trees on to a canal, very like those at Hampton Court, but neglected of course, and only suggesting what the place might be in other hands. We walked down the banks of this canal, under the shade of the huge waving boughs. On the opposite side were rich meadows belonging to the kiosk ; and grazing here and there were all the Sultan's favourite horses, turned out to grass for the summer months. It was a very pretty sight, for there were at least two hundred of these fine creatures ; and the attendant Arabs and Turks, quietly smoking at the doors of their tents, looked the very picture of turbaned happiness and content, as they gazed on some beautiful white or brown or chestnut favourite, pawing in the distance, and rejoicing in its strength and liberty.

These rich pastures are on the left side of the canal ; on the right is a broad road, and up and down this drove arabas and ox-carriages with crimson and gold awnings, filled with veiled women, and rude wooden carts filled with Greeks in holiday attire.

How astonished Rotten Row would be! I thought this, as a fine Turk of the old school rode majestically by on a snow-white mule with scarlet trappings. He was evidently a descendant of the Prophet, by his green turban: his flowing robes were of spotless white, his bare legs of a fine bronze-colour, and his shoes red. He was quite a picture, though moving along under the old plane-trees by the wayside; but so was an English officer, dashing by with two Crimean clasps on his breast, and a little bunch of golden acacia-flowers in his hand (sold in all the streets here, and having a delicious scent), I suppose to give to "somebody;" and so were two stately Circassians in their flowing robes and splendid arms; and so in fact was everything in the Valley of the Sweet Waters, including two wild Negro boys mounted on the same horse, and stopping by the fountain to dispute merrily which should alight for water. On the bank by the fountain sat a poor old Dervish and three or four veiled Turkish women, enjoying the shade, for the fountain-tree is a very fine one. But I shall never get to the end of my journey if I attempt to describe half the groups which delighted me so much.

We sat down to rest a little further on, in a small thicket of trees very like some of those in Bushy Park, and we rested right royally. First we sipped some delicious sherbet; then we ate a few crisp

almond-cakes, dotted with pistachio-nuts; then we clapped our hands, and the “musicians” came and entertained us with “a concert of music,” sitting cross-legged at our feet. I must confess that it would have been intolerable, but that we were possessed with the notion of doing all as in an Arabian Nights’ story. Then we drank delicious coffee, handed by a graceful young Greek, who spoiled the effect of his classical countenance by looking too sharply after piastres. Then we laughed immoderately at the coaxings and nonsense of three beautiful wild Arab girls, wanting to tell our fortunes in real Arabic, and regretted deeply that we were not artists and geniuses, to paint their splendid features, raven hair and eyes, and most royal rags. Then we looked admiringly at our neighbours, seated on cushions on the grass,—four beautiful Turkish women, like tulips for bright raiment, and with shy smiles for all, behind their thin veils. Their ox-car was close by, caned, and with large gilt wings carved on its sides. The white oxen, with their cheeks and foreheads painted red, and with necklaces of blue beads, worn as charms against the “evil eye,” lay contentedly resting by the slaves, who chatted and laughed, and were as merry as the rest. This was a beautiful group. Golden sunlight, stealing through the boughs, illuminated the soft veiled faces, the richly embroidered

cushions, and the antique-shaped water-vases, the rude but magnificent car, the gentle white oxen, and the richly-attired black slaves.

It was one of those splendid pictures so difficult to leave; but the Sultana's carriage was crossing the little white bridge from the Sultan's kiosk, and we hastened (as much as it is possible to hasten in this charmed land) to get a look. The Sultana, or chief wife of the present Sultan, is the mother of his sons, and it is said he is greatly attached to her. Her daughter, lately married to Ali-Ghalib Pasha, the son of Redshid Pasha, is considered the prettiest woman in Turkey. Over the picturesque white bridge came their carriage, drawn by four superb black horses. A Turkish officer, mounted on a white horse gaily caparisoned, rode before, and about twenty Lancers brought up the rear. The carriage was peach-coloured, and completely covered with barbarous silver ornaments; the spokes of the wheels were gilt, and the axletrees silver; the ends of the reins were peach-coloured ribbons; the coachman, a mixture of mountebank, Turk, and dressed-up monkey.

But the ladies inside, how beautiful and gentle and delicate they seemed to me! The Sultana occupied the principal seat in the carriage, and her daughter sat opposite. The Sultana is very small and very pretty, but melancholy-looking, and with an air

of exquisite refinement about her which is difficult to express. I had but just time to notice this, when my eyes fell and rested on the Princess. Fortunate that I was not Abulhassan the Prince of Persia! It is quite true that a Turkish beauty—really a beauty—“strikes you all of a heap,” as the sailors say. The Princess sat, bending slightly forward in the carriage, her “gazelle eyes” resting thoughtfully on a Turkish fan of snow-white feathers, which she held in her hand, the centre of which was entirely of emeralds and diamonds,—slight as a fairy,—the exquisite tint of her skin, seen through the misty white veil, just the hue of a shell where it approaches pink. The delicate robe of palest sea-green, and the wreath of diamonds trembling round her head like splendid drops of water in a charmed crown, instantly reminded me of Undine in her softest mood, travelling in this rich but fantastic equipage to visit some great River Queen on shore for the day.

About fifteen arabas, more or less gilt and flowered, followed the royal carriage. In the first four all the ladies of the Harem were dressed alike. First pale-blue feridjees with diamond stars shining under their white veils; then a magnificent amber-colour shot with white, green trimmed with gold, purple, pink, and violet, gems shining on every head and breast. It is something to see the ladies of the Harem, on the

fête-days of Bairam, in all their splendour. We saw them well, as the carriages stood still for some time on the plain, until, I am sorry to say, the disgraceful conduct of the English and French officers obliged them to move on. After driving slowly once round the plain, the train of arabas disappeared down the winding road which leads through the valley to Beshiktash.

The shadows were by this time beginning to lengthen, and we agreed to look for our caïque. It was very pleasant to sink down on its cushions again, after all the walking we had had through the valley and avenues. The river-scene was beautiful beyond description, in the purple light of the setting sun, falling upon departing caïque-loads, upon the fine trees and distant mountainous slopes, where here and there a scarlet feridjee moved slowly along or rested by the way, and on a few splendid groups of Greeks, still remaining on the banks. Almost all the Turkish women and their attendants had left, but the Greeks seem to be the most insatiable people in the world for pleasure. They were now singing, laughing, and dancing, as if they had that moment commenced. The children, and many of the young men, had made crowns of rushes, which they wore with evident delight. Others had twisted chaplets of wild-flowers round their heads. The little liquid-sounding drums

were beating time to the songs as industriously as ever, which, although rude enough, mingled pleasantly with the sound of oars and the splashing of water, as countless caiques dashed down the stream. Presently we came to a secluded creek, and under some large trees was a singular group preparing to depart.

Some French officers had “fraternized” with a party of Arabs, and were taking an impressive adieu, before stepping into a man-of-war’s boat with the tri-colour fluttering gaily in the evening breeze. Some of the Arab women, with their loose veils flowing round their dark faces, came tripping with bare feet among the thick water-plants which shrouded the prow of the boat; and a little child, with its single ragged garment fluttering in the air, was scampering down with them to see the last of the companions of evidently a very merry repast. Some French sailors were bringing down baskets and other evidences of their good cheer under the plane-trees that day.

How we enjoyed our row back in the purple light of the evening, and the cool, pleasant smell of the water-plants, which we touched with our oars now and then in avoiding the crowds of caiques! I looked for the storks again, and saw one of them still fishing and wading about in the water.

When we got as far as the arsenal, the crowd of returning caiques was really a wonderful sight : carriages returning from “the Derby” in England were nothing to it, and I could not help comparing the two almost national fête-days. Here was the wildest mirth, but neither drunkenness nor vulgar mischief. The Turks were floating by as calmly and composedly as they went,—the Greeks, wild among themselves, but offending no one. I shall long think of that return from the Sweet Waters at sunset, with the minarets of beautiful Stamboul shining before us, and the picturesque groups on the purple water. Here the sun sets, as has been so truly said,—

“Not, as in Northern climes, obscurely bright,
But one unclouded blaze of living light.”

Now the distant domes of Achmetie and Santa Sophia, the lofty cypresses, the masses of dark-red houses, the flag-embellished men-of-war, with their huge gilt lions, the turrets of the Roman Wall, and the windows of many palaces were illumined in a clear haze (if I may use the expression) of purple and gold, which must be seen to be believed, but which we watch with delight every evening stealing over the Asian hills.

Two antique caiques, lashed together, made a magnificent picture in this gorgeous light. Several of the men in them were remarkably handsome, and

one was standing up, reciting a story with great emphasis and gesture, to which all listened with attention, while another, with a wreath of wild-flowers and rushes round his head, reclined at the stern of the caique, with one foot dangling in the green waves as they floated slowly on. In another of these bound-together caiques some rude dancing was going on, as well as circumstances would permit, the dancer singing and reciting loudly all the time. These fine figures of Greeks looked wonderfully well, standing up, in their gold-embroidered holiday jackets and rich sashes, in the sunlight. But just before coming to the first bridge of Constantinople we were delighted indeed ; for on two enormous piles of timber, in a kind of arsenal-yard, close to the sea, were crowded, in every shade of bright and sombre-coloured feridjee, hundreds of Turkish women ; they were sitting by the wayside to see the rich and gay return from the Sweet Waters, just as those who are unable to go, watch the crowds return from races and fêtes by the wayside near London. But this was a splendid sight, the purple and gold light of the setting sun, falling upon two vast piles of groups of richest dye, and on the soft white veils, and upon little children playing with the ripples at their feet. What would a painter not have given to have seen it, and what would the world say could he paint it !

But my description of our day at the Valley of the Sweet Waters must come to an end, or you will be as tired as our poor caiquejees were, pulling up the rapid stream of the Bosphorus.

We left all the revellers far behind long before reaching Orta-kioy, and enjoyed a rest in our cool, quiet little arbour, before relating our adventures at dinner-time. We had certainly spent a very delightful day, and our quiet friend Dhudu thought so too. In the evening we sipped coffee on our divan under the window, listening to nightingales singing far and near, and watching the fireflies flitting among the orange-trees and passion-flowers, and the illuminated minarets of the last night of Bairam. But adieu at last! Ever, my dear Mrs. Austin,

Your affectionate

E. B. H.

LETTER XVII.

THUNDERSTORM.—RETURN OF TROOPS.—THE COMMISSION.

Ota-kioy, June 9th, 1856.

My dearest Mother,

I AM writing to you in the midst of a tremendous thunderstorm. About seven o'clock huge black clouds came frowning down from the north. The Bosphorus was quite darkened over, and we could not see halfway down the valley. Presently down came large, heavy drops of rain, pattering upon the dusty fig-leaves; then such floods as I have only seen *here*, tearing the very roads to pieces. In about a quarter of an hour an angry stream of turbid yellow water (almost a river) dashed down from the hills, over the road by the side of our house; and loud was the conflict of wind and water, where only an hour before weary cattle had panted up the hot and dusty hill! Down the noisy stream tumbled and rolled, first a dead dog, then a cat, and lastly

the skeleton of a wretched ox, which had died on the road of hunger and thirst a few days before, been skinned where it lay, and its miserable carcase left for the dogs, after the horrid fashion of this place.

We soon turned to our other windows, overlooking the garden. The poor roses, all in their fullest beauty, are sadly spoiled, and many bunches of orange-flower lie strewn on the ground. The passion-flower over the arbour and wall (a few hours ago covered with fine buds and flowers) is a little torn, but the great aloes look very fine and fresh, after such a gigantic shower-bath. Poor little Simione, the Armenian, will be busy in his garden tomorrow!

What a night it must be in the Black Sea! the storm has evidently come down from thence. It is now nearly dark, but violet-coloured lightning illuminates the whole of the valley and the hills beyond. Then comes the thunder, crashing and echoing from hill to hill, far away on the Asian side. Our little wooden house quite shakes and trembles beneath the storm, but they say that lightning is not so dangerous here as it is in England. Another prolonged flash! and the houses in the valley beneath, the minarets, the dark Bosphorus with shipping here and there, the villages and mosques on the opposite banks, are lighted up with a stream of coloured light. The effect is most beautiful. The large fig-tree by my

window rustles in the heavy gusts of wind. Our muslin curtains wave ghostly to and fro. The mice shriek, and run frantically round (or between) our wooden roof. My poor canaries wake up, and flutter about their cage with fright. The wild dogs howl in the most dismal manner. There is not a light to be seen in the Turkish camp opposite, nor further on at Kulalee, where the music of the German Legion usually enlivens the banks in an evening. I wonder how their thin tents have borne the tremendous gusts of wind and torrents of rain.

This is the first summer storm I have seen on the Bosphorus, but we had many as violent in the autumn last year. The huge black clouds are now sailing slowly down toward Stamboul, and the worst of the storm has broken just over our heads. We can count several seconds between the blaze of violet-coloured lightning and the crash of thunder, which shows that the storm-fiend is passing on to the tall minarets of Constantinople. The rain still pours down in torrents, and the large cypress-trees on the hillside sway to and fro in the hurricane of wind which comes with a shrieking sound down from the north. We are all looking anxiously at each other, hoping that our ships in the Black Sea may ride out the storm in safety.

June 11th, Wednesday evening.

It has rained with little intermission all day. Several large ships have passed by from the Black Sea, crowded with troops. Poor fellows, what a time they must have had! I noticed that only one ship had an awning, and that just at the stern of the vessel. All on deck looked drenched, cold, and miserable, clustering at the sides of the ship, and no doubt longing for the shelter of a roof. However, they are going home, to forget all the sufferings of war.

I was sadly disappointed yesterday, on hearing that the Mail had arrived, but no courier, who, owing to one of the railways in France being out of order, had missed the ship at Marseilles. Edmund is quite well again. Vassili and I had contrived a shower-bath, which has done him great good? Every day I hope to hear something about the Commission being finished, but Edmund has some cases to settle for the Commissariat, which takes up much of his time; for many weeks he has never had a moment to himself, and sits up terribly late. But I must say good-night, with dearest love to Ediebelle!

LETTER XVIII.

EDUCATION OF TURKISH WOMEN.—REARING OF CHILDREN.—
WANT OF INSTRUCTION.—BOOKS.—THOUGHTS OF HOME.—THE
CLIMATE.—RELICS FROM THE CRIMEA.

Constantinople, June 26th, 1856.

My dear Mrs. Austin,

We have a most valuable and agreeable acquaintance here in Admiral Slade : he is an Englishman, in the Turkish service, has done much for their Navy, and has resided at Constantinople for several years. He has also travelled in the provinces, speaks both Turkish and Greek perfectly well, and has written a very clever and pleasant book about Turkey. His name among the Turks is " Muchaver Pasha."

I believe he is considered rather an eccentric man by the English, since he infinitely prefers the ease and freedom of an Eastern life, to the rigid conventionalisms of London and Paris. Spite of all that he laments in their executive and government, he thoroughly loves the Turks as a people, and, I should

think, thoroughly understands them. We had a long chat about the women the other day, and agreed that, pretty, gentle, and intelligent as they generally are, their ignorance would be in the highest degree ludicrous, were it not so lamentable.

Then the question comes, "What can be done?" and what I want to ask your advice about is this, my dear Mrs. Austin. Admiral Slade promises that, if I can get a few little books, of the simplest instruction, from England, for these poor women, he will undertake to get them translated into the Turkish language, and given to such of them as can read. He assures me that there will not be the smallest difficulty in their being allowed to accept them, and suggests, as the most important subject to begin with, a few words on the rearing of fine, healthy children, for thousands are annually laid in their little graves from the ignorance and folly of the mothers. The whole race may be improved by the women being told that there are such things as digestive organs, muscles, and nerves, which perhaps not one in five thousand have ever heard of. I assure you that I have myself seen a baby at the breast stuffed with raw chestnuts; and it is quite a common thing to see a child with not a single tooth through, gnawing a large lump of cucumber. The other day, as I was passing near the mosque here, the Imaum was stand-

ing by a fruit-stall, with a most miserable-looking child of about eighteen months in his arms, which he was feeding with green apricots.

But these things you may see all day long, in every street in Constantinople, besides many a poor baby borne by on its little bier,—killed by an over-dose of opium, given to keep it quiet if fractious from teething. I am afraid, however, the English of the lower classes may blush at this accusation.

From the immense quantity of sweetmeats given here, mere babies have black and decayed teeth ; and it is by no means uncommon to find boys and girls, from seven to ten and twelve, with not a single sound one in their heads, nothing but a mass of black and broken stumps, most melancholy and sickening to see. The boys are brought up in the harems, lounging with the women on divans, until fourteen or fifteen ; it is easy, therefore, to see the vast importance of teaching the mothers how to rear fine and healthy boys, to take the place of the present miserably emaciated, listless race of Constantinopolitans.

I am assured that the women of this country are far before the men in intelligence, far less prejudiced, and far more willing to know and to adopt wiser and better ways.

The fresh mountain girls from Circassia and Georgia, who are always coming in, are very different in mind

and body to the poor slave bred and born in a harem at Stamboul. Their admiration of the strength and beauty of the English race knows no bounds, and I have no doubt that almost every mother would be thankful to be taught how to rear such beings herself.

I am really in great spirits about this cheerful little ray of light for the poor Turkish women, my dear Mrs. Austin, at least if you will lend your head; your heart I am sure of, as everybody is, in a good cause. Great caution will be important, that our books may "creep and gang," without rousing the prejudices or fears of jealous masters. Tract-giving people would stop the whole thing at once. What is wanted is all-powerful common-sense and general information. I think we should soon get to pretty moral and instructive stories.

What a different idea would a Turkish boy have of his mother, if he saw her gently occupied in reading and teaching instead of sitting on a divan, slapping and quarrelling with her slaves for want of something to do, and sunk in the most degrading ignorance!

The Sultan's ladies have lately had a translation of the Arabian Nights given them, and a book of love-songs. Other books there are none, but Admiral Slade assures me that they would be eagerly caught up by the few who can read. As I said before, he

undertakes himself to get them printed in Turkish here; and he is no visionary, but a kind-hearted and clever man, who thoroughly understands and knows the people, and what will answer with them. Here then is really something useful and interesting to do, which is frequently so great a want in many easy lives.

Mrs. Campbell once lent me a very useful book, called, I think, ‘Hints to Mothers.’ It was by a physician, but I believe there are many such, from which the most important directions might be extracted and simplified. In fact, the language must be as if written for children of seven years old. Of course any works prepared with this view need not be printed, as I could easily get them put into Turkish writing here, with the aid of my friend the Admiral, who is greatly interested in the affair.

How profoundly you would pity these poor degraded women, when young, so pretty and soft and gentle and intelligent,—but mere animals, though they be gazelles or fawns,—and when their first bloom and vivacity is past, indolent to disease, gluttonous, spiteful, and hopeless! Such they are made by the tyranny of their masters, when Nature has given them everything.

I would help them with all my heart, and only wait for you to show me how, my dear Mrs. Austin. I

hope to hear that you are tolerably well, and enjoying your garden and the green lanes and fresh heaths of Weybridge. After all this grand panoramic scenery, one longs for the charming detail of England. A hill looks lovely here at a distance, but when you get to it, there is no fern, "or old thorn;" nothing small, or pretty and refreshing; no roadsides, no cottages, no little gardens. But in this world one must be away from a thing to prize it at its full value. I always loved my home, but now it seems a little Paradise, which it were too much happiness to hope to see again.

The Loan Commission is rapidly coming to an end, and, I am happy to say, satisfactorily; only I sometimes fear for my husband's health, with such anxious and responsible work, in this exciting climate, and with the excessive fatigue of riding and walking over these crowded and sultry streets. However, I hope that all will go well, and that we shall return to Weybridge early in September. This variable climate is so very trying, that I could hardly wish to see my dear Edith here. It is beginning to tell very much upon us both, for, unless one leads the life of a tortoise, one always has a certain amount of fever and sleeplessness as soon as summer fairly sets in. The heat now, in the middle of the day, is frightful. Yet it is such a strange climate,

that, immediately after sunset, or even in the shade during the day, if you were to sit in the shady garden for an hour, you would most probably feel a cold chill creeping over you.

The languor and laziness brought on by the climate have prevented my writing you an account of my rambles in the Crimea; but, besides that it is fresh in my memory, I made notes in my pocket-book of all I saw, and, if you think the letter would be worth having, I will write it soon with very great pleasure. When we meet, I will illustrate it by my collection of dried flowers, from the different battle-fields and other places of interest. I have also brought snow-drop and iris roots from Balaklava and the beautiful valley of Baidar, shot and shell from the Malakoff and Redan, a Russian gunner's shoe and hammer, which I picked up in one of those subterranean holes in the Malakoff in which the besieged ate and slept. Those defences were indeed marvellous. We saw the sun set from them,—the ruined city and the sunken ships all bathed in the purple and gold tints of these regions. A nightingale was singing close by the Mamelon, on our right. Everything was peaceful, and all that one had heard of the dreadful strife and slaughter seemed like a dream. We then went to the Redan, and counted silently and with great emotion those frightful four hundred feet of slope up

which our poor soldiers had to fight: in fact, it was not fighting, but entering a fiery pass of shot and shell. An officer who was there told me that he saw several of our poor fellows dodge right and left once or twice before they could resolve on dashing in.

But I must not attempt to tell you more now. The ground is literally ploughed up with shot and shell. I picked up a torn epaulette, the broken scabbard of a sword, and several other sad remembrances of that dreadful day. A Russian soldier was there, who insisted on shaking hands with me, and gave me a little cross.

But farewell, my dear Mrs. Austin! Will you give my kind love to Lady Duff Gordon when you see her. I have got some delicious wood of aloes for her to burn in her favourite dressing-room; it will make her dream a story of the Arabian Nights. I saw the advertisement of Lady Easthope's translation of Ubicini's book on Turkey, but have not been able to get it yet. One treasures up the remembrance of graceful kindnesses, like so many precious jewels, especially when so far away. How often I think of you, my dear Mrs. Austin! You must pardon me, but it is sometimes so tempting to express feelings of gratitude and affection; and I think that the world would be much pleasanter if, with sincerity, was joined a little more demonstrativeness.

LETTER XIX.

THE PRINCES' ISLANDS.—THE 'EDITH BELINA'—SIGNOR GIACOMO.
CHURCH ON THE ISLAND.

Prinkipo, July 6th, 1856.

My dear Mr. Hornby,

HERE we are in a cottage at Prinkipo, which is the largest of the Princes' Islands, or the "Islands of the Blest." It is just like the Surrey hills, rising out of the sea, only with rocks and mountains all around; and among fir-trees are mixed fig and olive-trees, with every here and there a patch of sloping vineyard, the bright scarlet flower of the pomegranate, and picturesque Greek shepherds lying in the shade, with goats and sheep browsing about them. The view of the coast and mountains opposite is very fine, Constantinople in the distance, rising as it were out of the blue sea, just like Venice out of one of Turner's pictures. It is beyond all things beautiful. We have just returned from our evening walk, winding through heather, cistus, and arbutus, down to the

seashore. The fir-trees overhang the cliffs, which are green almost to the water's edge. I picked up several pretty shells for Edith.

Yesterday we saw a cloud of heat hanging over Constantinople, where the thermometer was a hundred and two degrees. Here, in the evening, it was but eighty-four in my room. Today a delightful breeze has sprung up, and the noise of waves dashing against the shore is most pleasant. We already feel quite refreshed, and have been watching the "white horses" hurrying over the sea. Numerous island caïques, with their white sails set, are bounding along. I must tell you that we have got a very nice caïque of our own; it is called the 'Edith Belina.' I wish you could see her riding so gallantly over the waves, her Union-jack fluttering merrily in the breeze. Our house faces the sea, of course, and a door at the back opens on to a rough path just cut on the mountain. We are up very early in the morning, for the steamer leaves before seven, and there is no other for the rest of the day. Sometimes the Greek milkman has not yet come up from the village, and then it is most amusing to see the zealous Apple-blossom, with her long plaits of hair unpinned, running after the goats on the mountain, with a tin basin in her hand; she looks so comically cross when the tiresome things skip about as if to plague her. They

are Signor Giacomo's goats, but everything which belongs to Signor Giacomo—or “Jackeymo,” as he is almost universally called—is at the “disposizione” of his tenants.

Signor Giacomo is a Maltese—was a little ragged sailor-boy, with bare feet, when he first entered Constantinople, as he delights in telling every one. The store at Galata, which he arrived at by many patient steps, has been a mine of wealth to him, and he now owns all the best land in the Island, and has built quite a little nest of white terraced houses. His own is a large and pleasant one, above a garden of three terraces, adorned with a multitude of white roses, which strike the beholder at least three miles off at sea.

This we always call “Giacomo's delight,” for here in the evening doth the cheerful and flourishing Maltese delight to sit, smoking a chibouque with an amber mouthpiece, which a Pasha might not disdain. Giacomo, when in his garden, arrayed in white, and with a broad-brimmed straw hat, is not unlike a small and smiling Napoleon, engaged in agricultural pursuits at St. Helena,—at least, such representations as I remember to have seen in children's books. Signor Giacomo hath chubby sunburnt children, too, almost innumerable, generally playing in the sand, but very gaily arrayed on Sun-

days and fête-days. Madame Giacomo is a kind, unpretending little body, who enjoys life merrily enough, and wears plenty of diamonds on occasions quite easily. She said so unaffectedly the other day, that, being extremely fond of music, she had begged Giacomo to buy her an excellent barrel-organ, which she thought better than attempting any accomplishment at her age; so, frequently of an evening, pleasant airs are wafted to my window from Madame Giacomo's little drawing-room, and I know that she is cheerfully turning the handle of her organ, to amuse herself or friends. Signor Giacomo's hall is adorned with several statues, and with pretty plants and shrubs in vases. All the family ironing is unpretendingly done here, and it is by no means an uncommon thing to see the master's broad-brimmed hat hung upon the head of a Flora, plaster though it be, or his gun (for Giacomo is given to quails, among other good things,) resting securely against one of the Graces.

Signor Giacomo is much liked and respected in the Island. The French soldiers quartered here for some time have given him their little wooden church, in which they held two Masses daily. Signor Giacomo announces his intention of giving a piece of land, fronting the sea, on which to more firmly erect the church, and offers to be at all the expense of work-

men, and to help to keep a "Padre" when the building is finished. I asked what it was to be: he said, "A Christian church," but seemed to be perfectly indifferent as to whether a Roman Catholic or Protestant minister should volunteer the cure. I liked his look of wonder at any one wishing to know more, than that it was to be "a Christian church, and free to all."

LETTER XX.

THE SULTAN'S BANQUET.—TURKISH ARTIFICES.—THUNDERSTORM.
—LONG DAYS.—VASSILI'S MISBEHAVIOUE.—DOMESTIC CHANGES.

Prinkipo, July 23rd, 1856.

My dear Mother,

YESTERDAY the Sultan's dinner-party came off. It has been the talk of Constantinople for the last three weeks. Famous cooks and waiters, it is said, have been engaged from Paris, and the Sultan seemed determined to have everything quite perfect, after the European fashion. I heard, last week, that the royal mind was greatly troubled as to the number of chairs of the same pattern in the hall of the Palace of Dolma Batche. There were not enough, by ten, for the guests invited (one hundred and thirty), and no artificer was to be found in Constantinople, "cunning" enough to make some more to match. However, I dare say everything was very splendid, and am anxiously expecting Edmund's return, that he may tell me all about it.

I can see the steamer coming in. The sky is so blue and clear, and the sea so calm, that one can distinguish it, the size of a bee, just as it leaves Stamboul. I am anxious to know how the guests reached the palace yesterday ; for, about seven o'clock, a large thunder-cloud, which had been hanging over Constantinople some time, burst with tremendous violence. Forked lightning darted round the minarets, and every now and then a splendid flash lighted up the whole city. Then I saw floods of rain fall, the great black cloud stretching from sky to earth. It was a very grand but awful sight. Then the storm moved slowly over the hills of Scutari, opposite our windows, and flash after flash of beautiful violet-coloured lightning illumined the dreary coast and bare mountains.

The island caiques, with their sails bent, made fast for the shore. The sea here soon rose, and a heavy shower splashed into the angry white waves ; but we had no thunder, which I was not sorry for, as it shakes these wooden houses in a way that is not pleasant. Mr. Hall came down very kindly by the steamer, knowing that Edmund was dining at the palace.

It was Tuesday, and I grieved over not getting my letters from home. It is a long day to pass here alone : the steamer does not get in till seven. I

have been walking on the beach, collecting shells for Edie, and drying a few flowers, and working a little, but one's days are fourteen hours long, and I have no books.

Vassili, you will be surprised to hear, is gone away : he had unfortunately taken to drink *raki* at the ‘Magyar,’ which did not do, and I so much alone. He was dreadfully sorry for being insolent one evening, and hung about the house for a week, hoping to be taken back again, as he said to Apple-blossom ; but Edmund would not hear of it, and Apple-blossom’s faithless husband is to take the place as soon as the Sultan’s grand dinner is over, which I suppose is today. He, Eugenio, has been helping at the palace. Melia, with the exception of half-a-dozen Italian words, only speaks Greek, which is not particularly cheerful for me ; but her husband speaks Italian, French, German, Turkish, and Greek perfectly well. Our present “footman” is a wild Greek of the islands, in blue trousers to the knee, bare brown legs, scarlet jacket and fez.

The steamer is in, and the ‘Edith Belina’ off to meet her ; so I shall stroll down to the shore, for letters and news.

To my disappointment, Edmund is not come back. There is a grand dinner-party at the Embassy today to all those invited by the Sultan yesterday. I have

not heard much about the royal banquet as yet, except that it was magnificent.

There was a great fire at Pera last night, closing a most eventful day.

LETTER XXI.

ORDER OF THE MEDJIDI.—THE SULTAN'S DINNER-PARTY.—THE PALACE.—THUNDERSTORM.—“COMMISSARY JOE.”—VISITORS FROM THE CRIMEA.

Prinkipo, July 23rd, 1856.

My dear Mrs. Hornby,

You will all be pleased to hear that Edmund has received his Order of the Medjidi: it is a handsome silver star, with an enamelled and circular Turkish inscription in the centre, surmounted with a small enamelled star and crescent. The ribbon is a rich green and crimson; and the Sultan's creation as a Companion of the Order is written in extraordinary characters, and enclosed in a white satin bag, with a silver tassel. It is a great pleasure to know that the Sultan is satisfied with the course which the Commissioners have pursued with regard to the English Loan.

Last Thursday the Sultan's grand dinner-party “came off” at the new Palace of Dolma Batche.

A tremendous thunder-storm burst over Constantinople about seven o'clock. I sat at the window alone, watching the angry clouds and zigzag lightning over the sea, and wondering how the unhappy guests would escape the torrents of rain which made one dense purple mass from sky to earth. I should have been very glad at that moment to know that they were all seated in the magnificent dining-hall of the palace when the storm-fiend arrived from the Black Sea,—all but the principal guest, Sir E. Codrington, who found it impossible to land, and, after battling with the storm for some time, was obliged to drop anchor almost within sight of the palace. He and his brilliant staff were seen for a moment, full dressed, from the shore. It must have been particularly provoking, as the Sultan had already put off his dinner more than once, that the English Commander-in-chief might be present. Edmund was among the fortunate people who rowed to the beautiful white marble steps and gate of Dolma Batche with Lord Stratford and Staff, in the magnificent state caïque. He was charmed with the palace, which they say is like a dream of the Arabian Nights. Some people assert—critics do—that in detail it is imperfect; but the effect produced on the mind is wonderful, and a guest has neither time nor opportunity to examine the perfectness of the gilding,

or the framework of the windows, or the polish of the marble columns and fountains. Ordinary mortals come home, as I say, enchanted,—nothing more nor less,—and can scarcely believe afterwards that they have not visited such a palace of Haroun-al-Raschid as Tennyson so splendidly describes ; only the “ serene and argent-lidded ” Persian girl is not to be seen. However critics, unhappy mortals ! say that it is not “ well finished,” go prying about in search of faults, and lose the beautiful idea and dream-like effect altogether. Nothing can be more lovely than the shadow of this snow-white palace reflected in the dark blue waters of the Bosphorus.

But to return to the dinner. The company were received by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha, and by Aali Pasha, the Grand Vizier. They were conducted through a white marble hall, to a simple but elegant apartment, the roof of which was supported by plain white marble columns. There, on a divan, sat the Sultan, in his usual military frockcoat and fez, his collar, cuffs, and sword covered with brilliants, and his Majesty himself looking particularly shy and uncomfortable, as he generally does before strangers. He rose ; Lord Stratford presented the English guests, and M. de Thouvenel the French. The Sultan had a few kind words to say for most, and plenty of smiles and bows, when he began to

feel more at his ease. The dragoman, Count Stefano Pisani, translated courtly speeches in the most courtly manner, with many a pretty turn about "alliances," etc., between England, France, and Turkey. All this over, more bows and smiles from the Sultan, and the company were led out, in the most gentle and courtly manner, by the Grand Vizier and Fuad Pasha, and conducted to the great white marble hall, where a magnificent banquet was spread, with vases of flowers, centrepieces, and gold and silver plate, after the English and French fashion of a grand dinner. The chandelier in the middle of the hall is of great size and beauty, and cost an immense sum of money; the Sultan is very proud of it; it burns four hundred jets of gas. About two hundred wax candles illuminated the lovely Eastern flowers and other ornaments of the table.

The hall, which has a lofty and glittering dome of glass, was lined with a guard of Turkish soldiers in their picturesque costume of the old Sultan's Guard, now never seen. I heard that the effect of their dress and plumes was quite spoiled by their slouching and dejected appearance, and unsoldierly bearing.

The dinner was profuse in number and variety of the dishes, but cold and ill-served, the European waiters evidently not well understanding their work. It was tediously long, for, interspersed with the

French dishes, came Turkish ones of all sorts, to please the Pashas (including pilauf); and the Pashas did eat of everything, to the wonder and amazement of all around. The Sultan's band was posted at one end of the hall, but, after playing one or two airs, the musicians grew frightened at the storm, which now crashed with great fury just over the palace, and ran away. These valiant men left a large door open in their flight, which producing a tremendous draught, half the lights were blown out, so that the end of this splendid entertainment was not as well lighted as could be wished; indeed, the rare dessert was demolished almost in the dark by Turk and Christian.

Many were greatly struck and impressed with the grandeur and solemnity of the scene, as peal after peal of thunder crashed over the dome of the palace, "so lightly, beautifully built," and vivid flashes of lightning played on the glittering array of Christian guests,—the first whom the world ever saw assembled in the palace of a Sultan. Some of the Turkish dignitaries looked gloomy and terrified, no doubt thinking that the wrath of Heaven had fallen on them as a punishment for eating with "infidels." To Christian fancy, it only wanted "the writing on the wall" to be read as a warning to the corrupt and fallen Moslem Empire.

I had almost forgotten to tell you that it is not

etiquette for the Sultan to dine with any one, so I suppose his Majesty moped in a corner of his sofa, or condescended to peep through the lattice-work of the women's gallery, while the feast went on. The latter proceeding I should think most probable, considering the interest which he had taken for some weeks in watching even the smallest minutiae of the preparations. The French, English, Sardinian, Prussian, and Austrian uniforms, and various Stars and Orders, made a goodly show, as you may suppose. Omar Pasha was among the Turkish Generals. The dinner was over by half-past nine. The next day Lord Stratford gave a grand military dinner at Pera. Lord Lyons, Sir Edward Codrington, and the principal Sardinian and French officers were there.

Edmund returned to the Islands on Saturday evening, glad to get a quiet walk after much hard work, and the glitter and fatigue. The heat at Pera has been frightful, and almost every resident there is ill, so I cannot help congratulating ourselves on being here in sweet and fresh air. Every now and then "the Commissioner" gets a holiday, when, after two or three hours' writing, we go out fishing among the rocks, or sail in the 'Edith Belina' to the coast of Asia, land, and take a long ramble in some ancient and solitary village at the foot of the mountains.

Herbert Siborne left us this day week, having spent

a couple of days with us here. He looks pale and thin from hard work and anxiety about his men and horses. I do not think this climate agreed with him. Scutari is frightfully hot, and he seems delighted at the idea of getting back to England. He has with him Edmund's horse and dog, Sultan and Arslan, and all my valued relics and remembrances of the Crimea.

About ten days ago, who should find us out one evening but the celebrated hero of Kertch, named by an admiring army “Commissary Joe.” He had had a severe attack of illness; we have nursed him, and he is now in a most jovial and flourishing condition, just the man to have with one in a strange land. He makes bargains for me in true military style, knocks refractory Greeks on the head, calls us up at five in the morning for our health's sake, making noise enough to wake the dead, goes into the sea, and splashes about with the enjoyment of a dolphin, does all sorts of housekeeping commissions for me at Pera, and copies Reports on a most gigantic scale of handwriting when “the Commissioner” is hard pressed. He goes down to the village every evening to look at the Greek and Armenian ladies, who sit at the ‘Magyar’ in rows, to chat, drink coffee, flirt, and smoke cigarettes. There was a great show of beauty the other evening, and he

begged me to "take up a strong position," where we could see them all to advantage. Presently he gave some ponderous sighs, declared that he "couldn't kill a fly," and that he was quite overcome by pretty hats and dark-eyed beauties, not having been accustomed to such dazzling things at Kertch. However bitter ale consoles him for everything, and he is now fast asleep in the vineyard, with an immense cigar nodding and jerking about in the corner of his mouth, and looking very much like an overgrown cherub in a jacket and foraging-cap. His arithmetical, commissariat, and mercantile knowledge is so useful to Edmund just now, that Commissary-General Smith agrees to let him stay with us on full pay as long as the Commission lasts, which I am very glad of, both for his usefulness to his country, enjoyment to himself, and for his kind and cheerful company. He is greatly liked and highly spoken of, both by his colleagues and by the Commissariat powers here, although that is generally no great praise.

How glad I shall be to get home I cannot say. Edmund almost wished me to return by the 'Himalaya' last week ; but I could not make up my mind to leave him. In no country, it seems to me, is a comfortable home so necessary as in this, and constant care too, about good and fresh food, clean linen, and a clean house. As it is, I think we have every pos-

sible comfort in the way of cleanliness,—for Cristo “scratches” the floors most industriously,—wholesome food, excellent dinners, and delicious tea. Many a wandering officer drops in at seven o’clock, and we have often more visitors than chairs and plates. I hear that we are loudly lamented at Orta-kioy, and many have found us out here. Edmund seldom comes home without somebody, and company from the Crimea give no trouble, a sheet and pillow thrown down upon the hard divan being considered a luxury; so they are certain of a warm welcome from “Apple-blossom.” We have often two or three such encampments, especially on a Saturday night; and many a tale of the war is told, and we talk of what we hope to do some day in old England. But I must bring this epistle to an end, with my best love to all. From day to day we hope to know the time of our return from these Moslem lands.

LETTER XXII.

CONVENT OF JESU CHRISTO.—FISHING EXCURSION.—BATHING-HOUSE.—EARLY RISING.—ISLAND OF HALKI.

Prinkipo, Sunday, July 27th.

My dear Sister,

I SIT down to write you a few lines after a rather tiring day. We have had a long walk over the mountain-path by the sea, returning by the old convent of Jesu Christo, and its grey rocks and fir-trees. The monk was at home, and as Mr. Sanderson, the Consul of Broussa, who speaks Greek, was with us, we had a long chat with the grey-bearded recluse,—such a pleasant, kind old man, a singularly good specimen of a Greek priest. He told us that he had made the acquaintance of two English officers who have been staying here, and seemed to regret being left to his usual dreary and uneventful life, now that the war is over and all are taking their departure. He said that the conversation of his military acquaintance, and their descriptions of that world which he had never seen, was

so instructive and pleasant. One of his friends was a Colonel Dickson of the Artillery, and we promised to give his love and greeting if we ever met the Colonel in England on our return. We went into the chapel,—built, they say, by the Emperor Theodosius. It looked quaint and dim and ancient as usual. Several Greek ladies were offering lighted tapers before the picture of a “gloried” saint.

We afterwards turned over the illuminated parchment leaves of Scriptures six or eight hundred years old, and the chapel possesses some even older, which I hope one day to see. The monk gave us a glass of delicious spring-water and some preserved cherries. He seems to have nothing to do in his garden just now: he was very busy in it in the spring, but now the weather is hot, and he seems to give himself up to gaiety; smoking, with great enjoyment of the glorious view before him, receiving visitors in the little ruined courtyard, and hearing news of the great world whenever he meets with any one who speaks Greek. Miss Barker is coming to see me on Friday, and then having an interpreter, I propose paying many a visit to “Jesu Christo” and its solitary greybeard, and finding out all about the ancient chapel and old paintings and crosses and tombs.

There is another monastery on the island, St. Giorgio, and there lies buried the Empress Irene

(of Byzantium opposite), who was banished to Prinkipo, where, in the days of her greatness, she had built the convent.

We went out fishing the other day in the 'Edith Belina,' Colonel Hinde sailing along in his caique close to us. Yanko and Pandelij are so proud of our Union Jack, which flutters gaily in the breeze. We sailed nearly round this island, and soon came to another, with only one house upon it, where dwell the poor family who tend the olive-garden and vineyard. By the side of their hut is a huge white marble sarcophagus, with two Greek crosses carved on it; it is said to be that of one of the Byzantine princes, who was banished here in the time of the Greek Empire. The good old Turk keeps his onions in it, and, as he munched his brown bread, seemed to wonder why we thought it curious.

We then went to fish on a magnificent group of rocks. Our caiques were moored close by, the cushions brought out, and a curious group soon made, which we said we should like to have photographed for you all in England,—Edmund with a large beard and moustache and Arab white cloak, gun in hand, perched upon a rock; I sitting leaning back on one, with my feet dangling over the waves, and Colonel Hinde, in picturesque costume, pointing out to me the swarms of fish and many-tinted seaweed

in the clear water below ; the caiques, with their white sails furled, at a little distance, and the Greek boatmen in their bright dresses, some sleeping, and others waiting upon us, and climbing backwards and forwards over the rocks ; Mount Olympus, crowned with snow, in the distance ; opposite, the grand coast of Asia ; islands here and there, rising out of the blue water. "Commissary Joe," dozing on cushions in the 'Edith Belina,' called out, "It's Paradise, only a little hotter." However, whether like Paradise or not, wherever we go, that worthy never moves without a good stock of Bass's pale ale in the caique. Colonel Hinde's men dredged for oysters, and with the contents of Apple-blossom's basket we made an excellent luncheon.

I am quite well and strong again ; the sea-bathing has set me up. No doubt the great heat made me feel so low and weak. There is much illness at Pera, but, though hot in the middle of the day, the air is always fresh and lovely here. Signor Giacomo has built me a bathing-house in our little bay, nailed to the few rough boards which make the tiny pier. Here lies the 'Edith Belina' at anchor, and it is such a quiet place that seldom any other caique enters it, except a fishing-boat now and then on a rough day. The bathing-house is roofed over with branches of fir with beautiful cones, and the water

looks so pretty with their reflection waving over the golden sands and seaweed underneath. All round is a place to stand and dress on, and I have had nails put up for my clothes, a cushion to sit on, and a shelf for my book. It is such a pretty Robinson-Crusoe-like house! and I often wish Edith could see it. I had such a laugh, tell her, the other day. I happened to say to the Greek who made it, that I was sorry there was no door seaward, so that I could swim out on the sands on quiet mornings. I suppose that he mentioned this to Giacomo, for the next day there was a little dog's hole, or beaver's hole cut for me to get out of, and you cannot think how funny my house looks now. I used to dive underneath before. You would be amused to see me sitting at my door, with only my head out of water, and a great piece of seaweed fastened on the top of my comb to keep off the sun, hanging becomingly down my face. I believe that any English sailor passing by would try to catch me as a fine specimen of mermaid, so pray look at any such creature attentively whom you may be invited to see "for sixpence."

This island life is really delightful, especially since some rather stormy weather has set in. It is very hot, but about eleven in the morning a strong wind has begun to blow every day from the north,

which soon makes a rough sea, the very sound of which is refreshing, after the still, quiet sultriness of Constantinople. Rising as early as we do here, too, is another way of making the best of the climate. I am often dressed, having bathed in the sea, by five in the morning, but at any rate am almost always up by that time, when it is cool and most pleasant. It is a beautiful sight to watch the snow-white mist, tipped here and there with rose-colour, roll slowly over the mountains of the Asian coast opposite; and then, turning your eyes seaward, in the far distance to track huge ships, dimly seen in the morning mist, slowly moving down the Sea of Marmora. Then, as the sun gleams out brighter, it gradually reveals to you, bit by bit, in a gold and violet light, the cliffs of Scutari, and the minarets and cypresses and cupolas of Stamboul, far away, like a dream, rising out of the blue water. To the left, in the foreground, is the lovely island of Halki ; it is three-hilled, and forms a beautifully undulating line, the valley dipping down so low that you can see the sea on the other side. On the highest hill, and overhanging the sea, is a fine old monastery ; the bell ringing for morning prayer floats sweetly over the sea, to where I sit at my window. In the valley below is a magnificent avenue of cypress-trees. The houses lie principally in the hollow, clustering thickly down to the water's edge,

where countless caïques and large Greek sailing-boats are moored, and where the islanders are sipping and smoking in the little water-palace cafanées all the day long.

Olive-gardens and vineyards are dotted about here and there over the hillside. But I must write one of my long letters soon, to give you a good idea of these islands, and of the summer gala-days of the Greeks.

LETTER XXIII.

ERECTION OF A CHURCH IN PRINKIPO.—MONASTERY OF HALEL.—
GREEK CHURCHES.—A GREEK WEDDING.—BISHOPS.—THE PA-
TRIARCH.—AVENUE OF CYPRESSES ILLUMINATED.—RETURN HOME.

Prinkipo, August 10th, 1856.

My dearest Mother,

SUNDAY was a proud and happy day for Signor Giacomo, who, as I told you, laid the first stone of the little wooden church left as a parting present to him by the French troops. He invited a large party of friends and neighbours, his children were dressed in their best, and Madame Giacomo's organ was grinding away at merry tunes all day long. At five o'clock Giacomo came in to say that they waited for us to assist at the ceremony. On the terraced walls of the garden before the spot where the church is to stand, waved the flags of England, France, Sardinia, and Turkey. It was a proud moment for Signor Giacomo, when he handed the venerable old Catholic priest off his donkey, and led him through the vineyard to a

rough wooden cross, stuck amongst the wild heath and cistus, which marked the proposed altar-site of the church. Here the reverend gentleman read the Latin service of the Church of Rome, assisted by a lay brother and several wild-looking Croats, no doubt recent converts, who stood with their fezzes off and their wild locks waving in the wind.

Mr. and Mrs. Cumberbatch were there, an English officer, and more than a hundred Greeks, including visitors and the islanders themselves. It was a beautiful and impressive scene. Here, among thousands of Mohammedans and wild sects innumerable, the name of Christian alone is a tie very different to that which one feels it to be in England. Delighted to see the cross raised, and simple words of peace and love spoken within sight of the mountains of Asia and the minarets of Stamboul, I should have been quite startled at that moment to remember the bitter feeling existing in England between Roman Catholic and Protestant, High Church and Low Church.

The cross was marked with the name of the regiment to which it had belonged: no doubt it had comforted many a sick and wounded soldier. I thought, what a picture it would make, backed by the arbutus-covered mountain, the venerable old priest reading beside it, and the wild-looking Croats regarding him with a kind of savage worship.

At the conclusion of the Service, Signor Giacomo spoke a few impressive and eloquent words in Italian. So simple was this little oration, that I much regret not remembering every word of it. I confess that I had expected a speech of a somewhat different character, not giving the little man credit for so much good taste, and thinking that the temptation to seize such an opportunity for self-laudation would be too strong to be resisted. Nothing however could have been better. All was said that ought to be said, and in an excellent spirit. All praise to Signor Giacomo for the good feeling which prompted him !

And now everybody was invited into Mr. Giacomo's terraced garden, to rest in the shade of his waving acacias, and partake of coffee and sweetmeats. We were however obliged to forgo this hospitality, for our caique was waiting to take us to a Greek wedding at the monastery at Halki, which I was anxious to see. So down our party rushed to the shore, for, as it was, Dr. Baretta (the bride's friend) feared we were late. The sun had just dipped into the Sea of Marmora behind Halki, as Madame Baretta, her pretty daughter, and myself, took our seats in the 'Edith Belina.' There was a fresh breeze, so the caiquejes hoisted her sails, and we dashed swiftly on through the sparkling waters to the wedding. The dear little 'Edith Belina' carries her Union Jack gal-

lantly. A strange sail passing by saluted her most deferentially, and I felt for her a sort of pride while teaching Yanco, our first caiquejee, how to return the compliment.

We soon reached Halki, landed at its tiny wooden pier, passed through groups of sleepers and smokers on the benches of the little sea *café*, through the silent and narrow streets of the village, to the magnificent avenue of cypress-trees which leads up to the monastery. It was impossible to help pausing a moment before the ancient gateway of the courtyard to admire the lovely view. The cicadas were still singing about the heat, and the distant snows of Mount Olympus were delicious to the eye after a rapid walk up the cliff. Inside the walls of the monastery is an old fountain, shaded by a tree, and here numbers of the Greek peasantry had assembled. Two sides of the square court are the monks' apartments, with the church at one end, and a suite of apartments belonging to the Patriarch at the other. The latter are often given up to the use of rich wedding-parties during the summer months.

After ascending two flights of rickety wooden stairs, with old and curiously-carved balustrades, we found ourselves in an open room or salaamlik, crowded with Greek gentlemen, friends of the bride and bridegroom. Coffee and sweetmeats were being handed

round. Beyond, and leading from this, were two other apartments; the door of one was open, and revealed a crowd of ladies in gala costume. A graceful Greek lady came from amongst them to welcome us, and this, Madame Baretta whispered to me, was the mother of the bride, which was surprising,—she looked so young. Madame Baretta is a Greek, but speaks Italian very well: she immediately conducted us to the apartment of the bride, a pretty, quiet room overlooking the cliff, and furnished with monastic simplicity. Here, on a divan, pale and thoughtful, sat a young lady in the simplest white dress, made after the English fashion, a light white veil falling from the Greek chaplet of flowers on her head, to the ground. She rose gracefully to receive us, and sat down languidly again amongst her cushions. She seemed wearied with the heat, and no doubt also with the agitation of the day.

I did not think her pretty at first, for her features were not perfectly regular, and she had a dark olive complexion; but when she raised her long black eyelashes and spoke, her face brightened, and we thought her charming. The shape of her head was exquisite, and, as Mr. Hall afterwards said, “put on in the most distracting manner.” Ladies, young and old, were constantly coming in to shake hands, kiss, and congratulate.

The heat of the room was most oppressive, and I was glad when Madame Baretta said that it was time to go to the church. There was a pleasant breeze in the old courtyard, and the vaulted archway through which we had to walk. Passing through crowds of Greeks, men, women, and children, lining the usually quiet walls and empty benches, we at last, with some difficulty, reached the church. It was lighted up with innumerable tapers in the centre, the aisles were left in deep shadow, and the effect was really beautiful.

By day, although interesting from its antiquity, this church, like all other Greek churches, is tawdry in the extreme; but by night the dark carving looks well, the pink and white glass chandeliers appear less trumpery, and the pictures of the saints, with their silver hands and "glories," less barbarous. The silent nooks, where the antique votive-lamp burns dimly before the shrine of some favourite saint from age to age, make a great impression on the mind. At first there is just light enough to reveal the silver chains of the lamp; the flame is scarcely more than the light of a glowworm, which it seems as if a breath would flutter away. Then you dimly discern the face of a saint, or Madonna and Child. You touch a wreath of faded flowers, suspended by the picture, and it falls to dust at your feet. On a little ledge

you see a crucifix, evidently of extraordinary antiquity; on another lies a book of Greek manuscript, the leaves falling to pieces with the breath of centuries. Here lies a silver heart curiously worked and embossed,—some offering of love, gratitude, or repentance, from a human one silent long ago; there, some ancient robes of the church, the once gorgeous embroidery glistening here and there, as it may have done centuries ago, in processions before kings and emperors.

The feeling of antiquity, in the dim aisles and corners of these old Greek churches, produces a sensation difficult to describe, and to me singularly delightful. I feel a kind of thrill, a mysterious joy, at quietly touching these silent evidences of ages long past away. There is a great charm in the reverence and care of old things, and the deep affection which, in the midst of much superstition, the Greeks show in their religion. A wild Greek woman, beating her breast in an agony of supplication, with the tears raining down her sunburnt face, in that part of the Litany when the people chant after the priest, “Lord have mercy upon us!” would startle the refined, indifferent, and well-dressed religionists of some of our fashionable churches; or a ferocious-looking creature in sheepskins, with wild eyes, and wilder, wandering locks, bending before a Madonna, with the love and

tenderness of a repentant child, and perfectly unconscious of all around.

But I am wandering as usual, and forgetting the bride and the wedding altogether. As I told you, the centre of the church was illuminated with an immense number of tapers; the arrangement of the pulpit and old carved stalls on either side was much after the manner of our cathedrals, only pictures of saints, and martyrs, and apostles, covered the arched walls of the aisles on either side. A small table, with richly-embroidered velvet cover, was placed in the centre of the beautiful mosaic pavement; on it lay an ancient-looking volume, with large silver clasps, and round it were three or four rich Persian prayer-mats for the bride to walk on. The smell of myrtle in the church was delicious, the pavement being thickly strewn with fresh branches of it, from the door to the table. The crowd was already great, and it was with difficulty that Dr. Baretta got us even standing-room near the table, the stalls being filled with Greek ladies, and the aisles behind crowded by the peasantry, work-people of the convent, boys, babies, caiquejees, and nondescripts of all sorts. However, close to the pulpit, in a stall by herself, sat a Greek girl of the island, evidently quite comfortable and happy. Unfortunately for her, a robed Greek priest motioned her to give me her seat. I

made a gesture expressive of “Pray don’t disturb yourself!” and she hesitated, until a thundering re-proof from his Reverence, sent her flying into the crowd. I was sorry for her, but nevertheless glad of her place, like a new Minister here when his friend has been banished or bowstrung. I had now an excellent view, and could leisurely survey the curious and novel scene before me. Two figures interested me greatly: one was an old Greek woman leaning on a staff, her white hair bound round the scarlet fez upon her head; the other a sweet, fair child of five, who had seated herself unceremoniously in the old pulpit, and kept looking, with a quiet air of amusement and pleasure, from the pictured saints and martyrs to the blazing lights and robed priests and crowd of eager spectators.

And now we heard the curious, droning kind of chant used in all ceremonies of the Greek Church. It was evident that the bride and bridegroom were coming. A man who would have been a beadle in England (he was a swarthy, thin, robed, and bearded potentate here), knocked a number of impatient boys on the back, or pulled frantically at their ragged locks and jackets, to keep them quiet, and cast a peculiarly ferocious look at the “singing-boys,” to keep their wreathed rushlights straight,—gave a woman a push, whose baby was engaged in an earnest attempt to

pinch the little silver finger of St. Demetrius,—separated two fiery, brigand-looking youths, greatly inclined to stab each other upon the pulpit-steps,—hushed a couple making love too desperately under the very blackest and primmest Madonna, and gently insinuated a large and particularly threatening-looking island dog out of the crowd. O English beadle ! what would you have said ?

But here come the “footmen” of the bride, most respectable-looking men ; for the bride’s family are, I am told, rich, and boast “highly respectable” connections. These fine specimens of stalwart Greeks carried lighted tapers about five feet high, each composed of three candles, bound together after the fashion of the fasces of Roman lictors, but affectionately, in this case, with white satin ribbons ; while as near the united flame as may be prudent, smile orange and jasmine blossoms in bonds of the same gentle, promising, and fair white satin, with long shining ends, expressive of the fullest measure of happiness. Well, the Greeks, with these gigantic wreathed tapers, stand aside, and in sweep, chanting solemnly, the long-bearded and magnificently robed priests. This is a very grand wedding, for the Patriarch himself is here, and no less than eight bishops. Hand-in-hand in the midst of them walk the bride and bridegroom. The bishops range themselves at the further end of

the table, the young couple standing before them, and then begins a solemn Litany, to which every one makes responses, bending low and reverently. Now the Patriarch himself advances towards the bride, gives her his hand to kiss, and swings a beautiful silver censer, breathing delicious incense, over her bowed head several times; he is a most amiable-looking old gentleman, but small, and sadly muffled up in an immense white beard, with gorgeous robes and a scarf much too large for him. According to our notions, I cannot say that I discovered anything earnest or impressive, either in the Patriarch or in the service. The Patriarch hurried over it as fast as possible, stopping now and then to reprove, in a snappish way, any priest who made a mistake in the responses, which, by the bye, they often seemed to do, and the old gentleman had sharp ears. The chanting certainly is the most horrible nasal noise possible to conceive. I have thought over many words by which to express its effect upon my senses; —*brutal* is the only term, strange and harsh as it may sound. The first time I heard this chanting was at a grand thanksgiving: I first laughed and then cried, and was never more shocked or distressed in my life.

Most of the bishops look like a mixture of Friar Tuck and a brigand; their huge beards shake with

their stentorian voices, as they bawl one against another, and haul their heavy mantle over their broad shoulders as if it were a coat-of-mail. One of the robed boys, holding a taper, was letting a stream of fat fall on the floor; a bishop gave him a hard slap accompanied with a ferocious look, and then went with his Litany.

I was glad when the chanting was over: the hymn was frightful, and we felt ready to faint. The poor bride, closely hemmed in with friends, bishops, and crowds of spectators, looked very pale; not a breath of air stirred, the smell of incense was overpowering, and it was sickening to see the tallow streaming from the tapers on to the flowers, and large drops falling from the faces of the priests. How I longed for the ceremony to be over! But now began the most interesting and important part. The bride and bridegroom slowly and distinctly repeat a few words by word after the Patriarch, who then joins their hands. Each gives the other a ring, which are exchanged several times from one to the other, with a prayer from the Patriarch, and at last placed on each finger of each. Then comes another chant, to which there is a solemn response of "Ameen" from priest and people. The Patriarch then takes the bride's ring again from her finger, and touches with it her bridegroom's top of her head, her temples, each side of

head, her eyebrows, between her eyes,—in fact all her phrenological bumps. This ring he now puts on the bridegroom's finger, and again taking his lately given one, touches his bumps with it in the same manner as he has just done those of the bride, and with the same prayers and exhortations he places it once more on her finger.

The couple are now married, and I see the bridegroom press the lady's hand with a look of great satisfaction: he is a fine and tolerably good-looking young man. Now his "friend" brings forward two beautiful wreaths of artificial orange-blossom and jas- mine, over which fall a profusion of long glittering gold threads; they are fastened together with rather wide white ribbon, two or three yards being allowed for the "tether." The Patriarch places one on the head of the bride, and another on that of the bridegroom, who looks remarkably uncomfortable and somewhat ridiculous in it; the gold threads tickle his face, and ramble in confusion amidst the luxuriance of his black moustachios; these wreaths are changed three times from head to head, and are then allowed to remain.

After this the Patriarch takes the hand of the bride (who kisses his with great devotion), and leads her round the table, her husband following like a lamb, and by this time perfectly subdued by the gold

thread, and by terror of his wreaths falling off. The times they scamper hurriedly round, the bish and priests following in splendid confusion as they may. Then the wretched couple kneel, and the grand old missal, and receive the benediction of the Patriarch. But the heat now became so fright and the crowd had increased so greatly, that it impossible for me to see everything that passed. I only know it was a great relief to hear that it was over.

The mother of the bride now entered the church, walked up to the velvet-covered table, knelt, and kissed the book. Then she rose and kissed the hand of the Patriarch, and then turned, with evidently great emotion, to her daughter, who instantly knelt on the pavement at her mother's feet: the latter raised her, and kissed first her marriage wreath and then her face many times. Then she kissed her son-in-law's wreath and face; he seemed very fond of his mother-in-law, kissed her half-a-dozen times, and then wiped a good shower of tears hastily from his eyes. Then began the general kissing of both. First the bride's sister, a very pretty girl, with golden hair, gave a long embrace, with a few tears,—then the brothers,—then the friends. First they kissed the wreaths, then each other's cheek, and lastly the lips. I was very much amused at the heartiness with which young ladies on tip-

gave kiss after kiss to this wreathed, flushed, and happy-looking bridegroom, who returned them all, with interest, in the most obliging manner. But the Patriarch and bishops feeling, I dare say, tired and thirsty from the heat, soon put a stop to this, and the procession was again formed. First went the torch-bearers ; then the Patriarch and four robed priests, their gold embroidery glittering in the uncertain light ; then the bride and bridegroom, hand-in-hand, still wearing their wreaths, and looking of course supremely happy although rather fatigued ; then the rest of the priests and bishops, chanting as they went in a confused mass of guests, island Greeks, monks, and women.

Oh, the delicious breeze, when at last we reached the portal and gained the courtyard ! Here we stood to mark the fine effect of light and shadow, as the procession crossed the cloisters and entered the Patriarch's house. The dark faces and picturesque costumes grouped around and under the old fountain-tree looked splendid, illumined fitfully by the flaming torches held by the Greek servants, and by the garlanded tapers of the procession.

A splendid German band, which has been some time in Constantionple, now struck up some graceful music, to which we listened for a few minutes, and then followed the procession into the monastery.

The salaamlik was fearfully hot and crowded. The principal room beyond was lighted up with wax candles placed in old-fashioned chandeliers round the wall. On a table in the middle of the room was a splendid bouquet of Eastern flowers. The bride and bridegroom, wreathed, sat on the divan at the top of the room, still accepting and dispensing kisses and shakes of the hand. Presently the wreaths were given by the Patriarch to the bride's mother; they are preserved with the greatest care, and buried in the grave of whichever of the two who wore them dies first.

I have little more to tell you. I wished the bride all happiness, and she thanked me very sweetly and gracefully. Beautiful trays of sweetmeats were now handed round by the bride's sister and mother, and each person had a lapfull; I tied mine up in my handkerchief, and have kept the prettiest for Edith. The Patriarch and bishops, now in their old black gowns, and tucked up comfortably on the divan, were very sociable, and chatted to every one who could chat to them.

We took each a glass of pink liqueur together, and then made our adieu, for all the ladies were ranged around the room waiting for the dancing to begin. They much wished us to stay, but a fresh breeze had sprung up, and I did not think it prudent to delay

crossing, as a tremendous current into the Sea of Marmora runs between our island and the one where we had been witnesses of the ceremony of which I have been giving you a sketch. We had a charming walk to our caïque. Nothing could be finer than the magnificent old avenue of cypresses, lighted up by the monks with flaming torches of pine-wood, to guide coming and returning guests. We found the sea very angry, and huge waves dashing violently against the shore. It was moonlight, and the 'Edith Belina' was soon in a flow of wild silver waves,—leaving the dark island of Halki, with the blazing lights of the monastery on the heights, and the twinkling lights of its cottages beneath, far behind her.

The bride will receive visitors for three days; and for three days coffee and sweetmeats and liqueurs will be handed round to all comers. After this patient long-suffering, things settle down to their ordinary routine. A very tedious, fatiguing affair a Greek wedding must be altogether! But I must say good-night. The heat has been fearful today. It is now ten o'clock: the cicadas are still chirping, but everything else is languid and quiet. Best love to all!

LETTER XXIV.

EXCURSION TO ISMID.—MOUNTAIN SCENERY.—ISLANDS.—FISHING-VILLAGES.—RAMBLES ON SHORE.—VEGETATION.—ISLAND SCENERY.—INSECTS AND FISHES.—RETURN TO PRINKIPO.

Prinkipo, August 18th, 1856.

My dearest Mother,

ON Tuesday last Signor Vitalis, a rich and hospitable Greek merchant here, invited us to join a party of friends going to Ismid, the ancient Nicomedia. I had often wished in our caïque excursions to get further, within view of the misty mountains to our right, and was delighted at the prospect of steaming along the coast of Asia to the very end of the Gulf of Nicomedia. It was arranged that we islanders were all to assemble on the pier at Prinkipo, at eight o'clock in the morning. Nothing could be more lovely than the weather—sea and sky one unclouded blue. The white walls and minarets of Stamboul shone in the bright sunlight far over the waves, and on the wild Asian coast the solitary fishing-villages, scattered few

and far between, and the white-sailed caiques moving slowly about, were plainly visible.

Like a little speck, a white bird on the waters, we first saw the ‘Sylph,’ miles away,—the air is so clear here. When she came nearer, she looked very pretty with her white awning and gay flags. We were soon off, every one being punctual (except a little island donkey, who had to bring a supply of spring-water on board, and kept us a few minutes waiting), and were soon steaming as close in to the Asiatic shore as possible. The view opposite these islands gives you a great idea of vast space and solitariness,—hill upon hill, mountain upon mountain, immense slopes, broad plains, low marshes, long vistas of sandy beach, and not a sign of a human being, not a human habitation or wreath of smoke, to be seen. Sometimes, after noting all this solitariness for awhile, you feel quite startled by making out a far-off field or olive-garden, and then, screened by a few cypresses, some ancient-looking wooden houses, desolate as the burnt-up fields around them.

Nearly opposite the Convent of St. George here, the Asiatic coast becomes more and more mountainous. I often watch with great interest two magnificent peaks, where snow-white vapours, tinged with rose-colour, rise majestically from the valleys on the other side, and flow slowly over them, throwing beautiful

shadows over the dark-green slopes of the mountain. Near the summit of the lowest of these peaks is a small group of cypress-trees, and tradition says that this is the burial-place of Hannibal. Irene, the imprisoned Queen of Byzantium, must have often thought of this when standing on the heights of her convent here. This part of the world is marvellously full of historical and legendary interest.

Some cool morning (if ever there will be one) I intend trying to reach those cypress-trees ; they say it can be done in five or six hours, and at least one would have a magnificent view of Mount Olympus, and of these lovely islands, the Sea of Marmora, and the Golden Horn far, far away,—beside the curious delight of thinking that one *may* be sitting by the grave of Hannibal.

I am writing very lazily, for the heat is great, and I am afraid of giving you but a faint idea of the marvellous loveliness of the islands, sea, and coast, through which we passed. But fancy one of the sweetest bits of the Surrey hills rising abruptly out of the water, only with grey rocks, covered with dark arbutus, heather, and all sorts of wild plants, reaching to white sands and dark-blue waves. Fancy misty mountains, with snow glittering on their tops, on one side,—a wild and magnificent coast on the other,—wild sea-birds and wilder-looking Greek feluccas,

occasionally darting by,—a convent or ruin standing out here and there in the bold outline of some noble cliff,—and you may have some notion of what I think would be quite Paradise, *if* the trees were larger.

We passed several small islands, which seemed uninhabited. Stone-pines grew so close to the cliffs as to hang quite over them. The rocks were of wonderful beauty and variety of colour, and the contrast of the brilliant green of the luxuriant arbutus and heath growing on them, with the dark-grey and red and brown of the different strata, was the most beautiful thing to the eye that can be conceived. Every now and then a dark eagle soared calmly round his possessions, scarcely ever deigning to flap a wing; or large black-and-white sea-hawks flew round and about the huge masses of rock that had toppled far out into the waves, which were surging up them with a pleasant murmur. It was very lovely, and I often thought how you would have enjoyed moving along in these dream-like seas. The last island was the most charming, having an uninterrupted view of Mount Olympus and the coasts on either side. On it, embowered in the fir and arbutus trees, we detected three or four small, heather-thatched huts, and in a little creek covered with white sand lay several fishing caiques idle, and their sails furled. A small scarlet pennant floated from each tiny mast, in honour

of the Courbam Bairam. It seemed almost surprising to see any note of holidays in so remote and silent a place.

Soon after passing these green island-gems we were fairly in the Gulf of Nicomedia. It is much wider than the Bosphorus : the mountains are three times the height, and, instead of white palaces and lovely terraced gardens, the shores are marvellous in rocks and cliffs and the wildest caves imaginable. I do not know why I should compare them, only a thought crossed my mind of the wonderful beauty, in its way, of each Strait,—the Bosphorus, soft and flowing, dreamy and luxurious,—Nicomedia, wild and grand and savage and solitary, to me so much more beautiful.

I often think that, once past the island of Antigone, you are at home, that you can love the country as well as admire it. It is our own dear mother Nature here, and all her sounds are alike sweet and pleasant. On the Bosphorus you constantly hear the Muezzin's call from the minaret,—the thunder of guns announcing that the Sultan has gone to mosque, or that it is Ramazan, or Bairam, or some other Mohammedan feast, or the day when the Prophet went to heaven on a white camel, or when he rode among the Faithful on a brown one ;—you can never forget, or lose sight of the unhappy, degraded

state of the women,—you are always longing to do something signally dreadful to the Pashas, and secretly grieving for the people,—you are constantly vexed to see dirty streets, dilapidated mosques and fountains, and everything going wrong. In fact, one grieves and mourns and rails at Constantinople till one is tired ; but this sea might be the Lake of Como, and the land the Surrey hills, only with rocks and cliffs and caïques and figs and olives and old convents and pomegranates and eagles and centipedes and monks ; and it is really extraordinary what variety of scenery and objects a sail of two hours along these coasts offers. You may imagine then how delightful it was to leave island after island, village after village, far behind,—to come within sight of lofty mountains crowned with vast forests, range after range, one beautifully undulating line after another, until terminating at the shore in vast cliffs and towering rocks covered with plane-trees and pine-trees and superb laurels, heath and juniper. Every now and then this grand landscape,—the profound silence, and absence of every sign of humanity,—the huge rocks, rising like islands abruptly out of the sea,—the mountains shining with snow far above the dark woods, Mount Olympus hemmed in like a giant in his holdfast, and crowned with his white helmet, which even this fierce sun has no power to

pierce,—the hazy, dreamy light above the highest points, uniting them in a soft violet bloom to the masses of snowy cloud,—all this wild and silent magnificence impressed us much with a feeling, or rather sensation, that it was antediluvian. Enormous dolphins were sporting about, sometimes rising completely out of the water, just like those in ancient prints. It must be a grand place for fossils : I dare say we might have found the bones of some leviathan on the shore. However, there are plenty of jackals and wolves, wild-boars, and some bears too, who might possibly feel inclined to add ours to the collection ; so it might be as well not to venture without a good guard. Signor Vitalis talks of going in the winter with a hunting party, and well armed.

At last we turned the corner of a noble grey rock crowned with superb tufts of heath and arbutus (the richest and brightest green conceivable), and here were signs of life. Eighteen fishing caiques of the antique form, their lofty beaks and prows adorned with a rude embroidery of large blue beads, lay at anchor in a little bay formed by the jutting rocks. It was the prettiest and most picturesque little fleet one could well imagine, and covered with Turkish flags and streamers in honour of Bairam.

A small fishing-village lay half way up the cliff, approached by a winding path through an olive-

plantation. On each side were vineyards; beyond them, the wild mountainous, arbutus-covered land; the minaret of a tiny mosque showed from behind a small clump of cypresses, but not a soul was visible: all I suppose were reposing, as it was Bairam and midday. We were now making but slow progress, for a strong breeze had sprung up against us, which soon lashed up a stormy sea. Some of the waves dashed up so high that two or three of us sitting in the prow of the vessel got a good ducking. The full rolling tide of dark-blue water, with the "white horses" rushing furiously along, looked singularly beautiful, contrasted with the many-shaded green of the woods, and olive-gardens, and vineyards. Our eyes followed with delight Greek barks bounding along, every snow-white sail set, and tacking for some distant mountain-village, just to be made out high, high above, nestled in dark oaks and cypresses. Immense dolphins kept darting after our ship with singular rapidity, sometimes leaping quite out of the water, and then suddenly disappearing in its sparkling depths. It certainly was a most lovely journey.

Presently we came to a Greek fishing-village again, but of considerable size. By its side were the ruins of a large fortress, the walls of which were covered with the same bright-green shrubs of the most luxuriant beauty. Here also the caïques lay in the same

holiday idleness on the beach. The vineyards seemed to be very fine, and large golden-coloured melons were basking by hundreds in the sultry fields near the houses. Every here and there we perceived, nested among the rocks, the little huts of shepherds, but neither sheep nor goats were to be seen. Nothing seemed stirring on shore, and on the sea only ourselves, and the restless sea-birds, and one or two wandering feluccas. The rocks beyond this were surpassingly fine, picturesque, and varied. We often thought, "Here are the walls and battlements of a ruined castle, with huge masses fallen down and heaped upon the shore;" but, on looking closer, we found that no mortal hands had ever piled or hewn them, that the lords of these giant keeps had never been other than the eagle or sea-hawk,—as good masters perhaps as the ferocious chiefs of olden times.

The breeze had now increased to a gale; some of the ladies were ill, others frightened, and we made but little way against the rush of wind and water rolling down the gulf. To my great regret, Signor Vitalis told me there was no hope of reaching Ismid (Nicomedia) in time to return that night; it is seventy miles from Constantinople. I was greatly disappointed at first, wishing so much to see the remains of an old castle and wall built when Nicomedes, the King of Bithynia, lived there. However, there was

nothing to be done but wonder why people who are ill with a breeze ever go to sea for pleasure. Signor Vitalis was most kind, and anxious to please everybody.

Another pretty wild-looking village soon came in sight. We looked out anxiously for trees, and seeing some of considerable size in a little valley near the shore, agreed that it would be very pleasant to land there, Ismid being now out of the question; and so our anchor was quickly cast in the quiet bay. Here, with the usual fun and laughter and chat and flirtation of a picnic, we dined; at least, a most tempting repast was served; but it was too hot for any one but cheerful "Commissary Joe" to eat, and to drink we were afraid. Somehow or other I think it would take a great deal to make that remarkable man and Crimean hero afraid of iced champagne,—an earthquake, or comet at least, some one suggested!

A number of large caiques, rowed by fine, hardy-looking Greeks, now glided up to the 'Sylph,' and all bent on pleasure and with the spirit of adventure, started in them for a ramble on shore. There was a little wooden pier stretching some distance out into the sea. The village seemed to be inhabited also by Turks, for in a remote corner rose a small minaret, with the usual dark cypresses, gently bending their heads in the wind. Once on shore, people separated and went their several ways: some walked straight

to the trees, to sit down ; others proposed a stroll through a magnificent ravine, leading inland ; many wished to see the village, which seemed primitive and picturesque. One mentioned ripe grapes in the vineyards, and hinted at green figs ; another pointed to a glorious grey cliff covered with arbutus and myrtle, and commanding a view of marvellous beauty. “Bother your fine scenery !” growls Commissary Joe ; “ I shall do like a sensible man, go and drink a cup of coffee with that jolly old Turk there.” He disappeared into a little wooden kiosk built over the sea, at the door of which several villagers quietly smoked and regarded us. I do not know who followed him, for a few of us resolved to stroll along the shore, and see what was to be seen beyond a fine cliff, which stretched its rugged green sides far out into the sea. But it was easier to *talk* of walking than to *walk* today, the heat was so oppressive. The ground was so hot that it quite burnt our feet, and the sun struck from the rocks with the scorching fierceness of an oven. Without the wind it would have been impossible to move ; as it was, we did not meet a single living thing,—not a sound but the dashing of the waves below, and above on the olive and fir trees, the constant “trill, trill” of countless cicadas. We found ourselves toiling up a rough, chalky road, cut in the most picturesque manner

out of the cliff. Below us lay the sea, then came rocks, and then a thick border of olive-trees skirting the pathway. High above us, on the other side, were luxuriant vineyards, studded every here and there with a dark fig or pomegranate. This side of the road was fenced also with olive and wild Daphne, and many (to me) unknown shrubs. I noticed one in particular, which I saw last year growing on rocks by the Black Sea. It is like the ash, only smaller and much more delicate-looking, and bears the loveliest bunches imaginable of berries just like coral, its stems charmingly shaded in delicate pink and brown. On this and many other of the trees hung a very pretty parasitical plant; long threads of pale, delicate green, with an exquisite little bunch of tiny golden flowers at about four inches apart on it. I was so concerned at having neither my boards nor even a book with me to preserve a specimen. Here also grew in profusion on the rocks the kind of juniper, bearing clusters of bright yellow berries, of which they tell me henna is made, which dyes the Turkish ladies' hands and feet. There were wild artichokes, their heads hoary with soft white wool, wild asparagus, and, what I was charmed to see, the real, wild, original hollyhock, single but brilliant, and not nearly as large as the favourite of our English shrubberies. Then I came upon large masses of a plant of which

I was determined at least to try and get a specimen. It grows seven or eight feet high, and is covered with long spikes of lavender-coloured blossom, having a most pleasant smell, something, to my fancy, like eau-de-Cologne: the leaf just resembles that of the lupine. Round these bushes fluttered a marvellous display of insect life; superb butterflies, large and small; immense purple humble-bees, looking at first more like beetles; and richly-feathered moths, with mouse-like faces, beautifully streaked with cream-colour and pink down the back. A collector would have been wild with delight and perplexity which to catch first, the lovely yellow butterfly with purple eyes, or the black-and-white velvet one, or the one studded with jewels and "eyes" quite shaming our "peacock,"—or the tiny white-and-scarlet thing, or the gleaming blue, or the exquisite green. I have long resisted making a collection, not having the means of depriving the poor happy things of life quickly and effectively. However, I have succeeded in getting two excellent specimens of the sweet-smelling plant and insect Paradise to add to my Eastern "Flora." They laugh at me very much for scrambling about in the heat, but it is impossible to see so many pretty and novel things unmoved.

Here I found two snailshells of gigantic proportions, richly streaked and ringed with brown.

Some goats had evidently been clambering up the cliff, and had dislodged them from the loose broken-up chalk and iron strata. I shall show them to Dr. Hassall, believing them to be very curious and rare.*

We now came to a truly magnificent fig-tree ; its wide-spreading branches and massive leaves quite overshadowed the little mountain-road, and made a pleasant shade. Sloping upwards from it was a vineyard, and many pomegranates covered with yet unripe fruit. "Here we will rest !" we all exclaimed. So we rested, and talked about the sultry heat, and listened to the cicadas, and wished for the cool, soft song of a bird, and marvelled at the huge piles of rock fallen near us (among even the figs and vines), and at the splendid beauty of the forest-covered mountains opposite and the fir-clad shore. We regretted a little too not getting on to Ismid, as the coasts were becoming finer at every turn. But that was useless, and as the rest of the party were too tired and too much exhausted by the heat to move just yet, I resolved upon seeing if possible what was beyond the next projecting cliff. So off I started, promising to return in ten minutes.

I gained the top of the hill, and the view was

* Mr. Buckland tells me that these snails were highly esteemed by the Romans, and that even in these days they are evidence of a Roman settlement having existed on the spot where they are found.

indeed glorious. Then who could resist winding down again into the valley, it was so beautiful! I sat down on a piece of rock shaded by some olive-trees, thoroughly enchanted. Before me lay a vast fallen cliff, almost covered with bright plants and shrubs; but what pleased and charmed me most was to see a silvery shower of “Travellers’-joy” streaming down its rugged sides. How it reminded me of English woods and lanes! I had not seen it before in Turkey, and it seemed like an old and dear friend.

This was a delicious place to rest in. I watched the bright lizards creeping in and out of the crevices in the rocks, and fancied that sometimes their quick bright glance rested on me. Opposite was a dark-brown cave; heavy creeping-plants hung in thick masses over its entrance, and laughing, fluttering vine-leaves peeped in from above. Pretty rock-doves were cooing, and constantly flying in and out,—the only sound that broke the profound silence. “Now,” I thought, “I must go, although I shall never see this lovely place again.” So I arose, with a lingering look at the deep shade, but still could not turn back, and resolved quite desperately to see round the next cliff. I kept my face turned as much to the wind as I could, and ah, what a delight it was to see a new reach or vista of this magnificent gulf! never shall I forget it! The path now wound downwards, and I

found myself within a few feet of the shore : it was impossible to resist, so I scrambled over burning rocks and stones, and soon stood by the waves,—the same mighty rush of dark-blue water,—a nearer view of Olympus ! Plunging my little white umbrella into a pool amongst the rocks, in order to defy the sun's rays, I rushed on from stone to stone, forgetting the heat, the distance from my party, my promise, everything. Never had I conceived anything so beautiful and so grand ! the sea and the mountains, and the solitary shore garlanded with vineyards and pomegranates and all sorts of bright and shining plants. At last I sat down in a beautiful little bay.

So great was the impression this scene made upon my mind, so keen the delight with which I almost desperately endeavoured to impress upon it even the smallest details, that even now I have the greatest pleasure in recalling it, only with a deep regret at the feebleness of all description in comparison to the reality. I kept saying to myself, “ In this life I never shall behold it again,” and literally could not tear myself away. On many of the smooth stones lay beautiful pieces of seaweed, and several corallines of great beauty. I tried to gather some of these, but the heat of the sun had made them brittle, and to my great regret I only preserved a few fragments. Here one might think that some of

the large stones had lain undisturbed since the Deluge. I saw many petrifications—in fact enough to make one's heart ache, having no means of transporting them. However, I am partly consoled while writing now, by two pieces of stone on my table before me, one white and the other red, completely incrusted with fossil-shells, which I managed to carry off, together with two small ones. I could not have come away without some token from this lovely shore.

I do not know how long I sat there, and it seems now a vivid and pleasant dream of the old world, unchanged since the imperial galleys of Diocletian floated by. I remember tracing out the tracks of snow on a far-off mountain, and thinking that, shining in the rays of the evening sun, they looked like silver streams broken loose from some enchanted fountain,—and watching the lights and shadows on the distant valleys, and suddenly discovering a tiny village, built of dark wood, nestling under a hanging pine-forest, and its little pathway winding—winding through the brushwood, and thinking I should like to know all about the solitary lives of the peasants in this wild home, and many other things. A little pool of the clearest water lay at my feet. How delighted Edie would have been to watch the small, many-coloured fish darting about in it, and the “soldier-crab” (his small crimson body hanging out of the long spiral shell

to which he has fitted himself), fishing industriously for his supper! I noticed one remarkably pretty crab, of a delicate salmon-colour, spotted richly with brown. He seemed a most intelligent little fellow, and was fishing dexterously for a tiny sand-coloured fish, not much larger than a shrimp. When he succeeded in catching one, he buried his little back in the sand to keep himself steady, and ate his prey with great gusto: then tidily and briskly cleaning his feelers, he bustled off sideways in search of another in the bright and shifting sand. Shining at my feet amongst the seaweed lay a lovely purple-lined shell, which I had never seen before, and was delighted to add to my collection. I thought of Tennyson's exquisite inquiry as to the inmate of a shell found on the sand, "void of the little living Will, that made it stir on the shore?"

"Did he stand at the diamond door
 Of his house in a rainbow frill?
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,
 A golden foot or a fairy horn
Through his dim water-world?"

But every pleasant hour must come to an end, so I took another wide, long look, put my stones under my arm, and my tender corallines, protected by seaweed, as safely as I could in my pocket, and bent my steps towards the little valley of the fig-tree. Now

I began to think that it was a long weary way off, that they would be frightened about me, and that there were Greek pirates all along the coast, they said, in the shape of the fishermen and others. Man Friday's footprint on the sand could not have startled Robinson Crusoe more than a fine bunch of grapes lying on a stone did me, for I knew that some wild Greek or Croat must be near. However, on the next hill I saw Edmund, who had come to meet me, and to scold, and I was taken down to the village at a rapid pace, hugging my treasures, and feeling very much like a naughty child taken in the act of straying and birds'-nesting.

We found a detachment of our party in the little cafanée, sipping coffee and lemonade. They were all delighted with their several strolls. Some had been into the vineyards, others up the deep ravine into the valley beyond—in winter a mountain-stream. There were a few fine Turks of the old school, with magnificent turbans, smoking their nargilehs calmly on the benches. They seemed to wonder what we were about—indeed to wonder exceedingly, when they beheld my stones, and fossils, and my tired looks. The coffee and lemonade were both excellently fragrant and good, and after such a tiring excursion doubly enjoyed. The wind had now dropped, and we rested pleasantly in the little cafanée, listening to the calm

ripple of the waves on the shore, and to the deep whispered conversation of our majestic neighbours, sitting cross-legged on the benches. Then we bade adieu to these picturesque and kingly villagers, and stepping into the caïques were once more on board the 'Sylph.'

We steamed rapidly and pleasantly back, and reached Prinkipo just as the moon was rising, and the monotonous evening songs of the Greeks, and the twang of their guitars, were sounding from the 'Magyar.' I hope my account of a long summer's day on the shores of Asia will not have tired you. My chief pleasure when alone is in writing down all that has delighted me.

LETTER XXV.

THERAPIA.—GREEK VILLAGE.—ROMAN RESERVOIRS.—SERVICE
ON BOARD SHIP.

Therapia, August 25th, 1856.

My dear Sister,

We came here on Thursday, and found the cool breezes from the Black Sea very delightful. The next morning Mrs. Brett, Captain Murray, and myself started for the Forest of Belgrade. We took caique to Buyukdere, where a teleki awaited us, drawn by two wretched horses, meant to be white, but their natural brilliancy rather obscured by patches of dried mud. Our driver was a Greek; and a wild-looking Tartar boy sat by his side, and assisted in torturing the animals into what is commonly called a "jog-trot." How we envied Captain Murray, galloping on a bright bay at our side, especially when one terrific jolt dashed Mrs. Brett's head through one of the crazy windows, and I received a mild reproof from the driver for permitting mine to do the same

at the next. We might well enjoy a ramble in the forest, when we got there, after such a shaking !

We stopped near the village, for I was enchanted at the sight of a fine old fountain, overshadowed with ancient trees, and in a good state of preservation. Two Greek women stood there, in graceful attitudes, and with water-vases on their heads, just as they must have done in Lady Mary Wortley Montague's time. Do you not remember she describes this fountain, and the villagers assembling around it in the evening ? We searched about the forest for the old Embassy-house in which she lived, and which still exists in tolerable repair, but unaccountably missed it, although we were afterwards told that we had been close by. The villagers had not even a legend of either house or lady. However, we must go another day ; for I would not miss seeing it on any account. We had such a pleasant day, walking about in the fine forest glades, richly tinted with many bright shades of autumn, and spreading far and wide. We made charming bouquets of wild flowers, finding a very curious one—a bright scarlet bell, closed at the bottom, and containing a single large red berry.

We took luncheon under a noble horse-chestnut tree, by one of the great Roman Bends, or reservoirs, and pleased ourselves with thinking that Lady

Mary must often have sat on those very stones, beneath its shade, and listened to the roar of the water, as we did. We lingered, unwilling to depart, till very late; and positively, by bribing our ragged drivers, we returned through the woods at a gallop, although how we escaped an overturn in the dark glades and roughly cut paths, I cannot imagine.

Yesterday we heard Service on board the 'Royal Albert,' Lord Lyons kindly sending his own boat for us. We had the great pleasure of a short chat with his Lordship; and when Lord and Lady Stratford arrived, all went on the upper deck. It is a magnificent ship, and the sight was a most grand and impressive one; about eight hundred men were ranged on the lower deck, sailors on one side and marines on the other, immense Union-jacks forming a screen behind them. The Service began with the Morning Hymn, sung by all on board, and led by the trained band of sailors and a few wind-instruments. It was almost too much to bear, so profoundly affecting was the deep and powerful burst of voices on the quiet sea, and so far away from home, of men returning safe to England after all the dangers they had gone through in this terrible war. Many still bore traces of severe wounds; almost all wore two or three medals. Adieu!

LETTER XXVI.

CLIMATE AND SCENERY.—PARADISE OF THE GREEKS.—BOATING EXCURSIONS.—THE MONASTERY OF ST. GEORGE.—THE OLD GARDENER.—HIS SUMMER RESIDENCE.—‘THE MAGYAR.’—AMERICAN AND GREEK LADIES.—GREEK HOMAGE TO BEAUTY.—BURNING A CAÏQUE.—FISHING BY NIGHT.

Princes' Islands, September 6, 1856.

My dear Mr. Hornby,

I FIND life in the islands very pleasant in summertime, even with nothing more to occupy me than the birds and crickets, and holiday-making Greeks. Not having wings, and not having learned to smoke cigarettes on a donkey, I idle about in the ‘Edith Bellina’ from one shady creek to another, or make excursions to the Monasteries, or to the opposite shore. The days are very long, for the early mornings are so deliciously cool and fresh, and the Greeks so noisy and restless, that sleep after five or six would be difficult even for a dormouse. I have been up several times by daybreak. It is such a beautiful sight to see the huge volumes of mist roll upwards, the out-

lines of the opposite mountains gradually revealing themselves, and the first rosy tints of sunrise stealing over the dark grey of sea and land. When the sun bursts forth in all his splendour, it is a picture indeed, or rather a series of most beautiful ones, from the distant minaretted city to the green islands near. Presently, by the glittering of window-panes, you can mark tiny villages nestled far up the wild mountain-side opposite, and here and there fishing-villages clustering along the shore. Caiques, with their white sails set, are soon out and busy on the blue waves; the monotonous chant of the fishermen sounds pleasantly in the fresh morning air. Then a picturesque-looking Greek sportsman steals by our cottage, his gun on his arm, and accompanied by two or three dogs of irregular breed, and almost as wild-looking as himself. Then slowly come the shepherds, their mixed flocks of goats and sheep frisking merrily to the sound of the tinkling bells of the "guides," who snatch fragrant branches of the arbutus and cistus as they go by. The scent of the wild shrubs here is very pleasant, and they grow in the greatest luxuriance on the stony, uneven ground. I have found several varieties of heath in great beauty. There being no large trees on these islands, they always look most beautiful morning and evening, when the sun is low, just touching the sloping vine-

yards, and the short, dim, olive-trees ; and then, of course, the fine grey rocks and the ruined monasteries above seem to rise higher out of the dark blue water.

The Greeks of Constantinople consider Prinkipo as their paradise on earth, and begin a regular course of monotonous amusement from the first moment of their arrival ; which is scarcely varied for a single day, up to the last instant of their stay. About seven in the morning all the visitors who have not departed for Pera by the early steamer, are to be seen (if you take caique toward the village) wending to the little wooden bathing-houses on the shore. Some of these people have returned from an early donkey-ride up the mountain—most from the divan and cup of coffee. Through all the sultry hours, until about four or five o'clock, everybody lies *perdu* ; not even Signor Giacomo's Croat gardeners are to be seen, not even his sun-burnt children,—scarcely a single caique moving about on the water ; only under a large fir-tree opposite our windows a red-capped shepherd, fast asleep, with three or four drowsy goats about him, and a large, dark eagle or two soaring majestically about. The only sound is the ceaseless chirp of the cicala, a deep-toned grasshopper which here dwells principally in the fir-trees. A dark cloud of heat hangs over distant Constantinople. I fancy that, if even we

were nearer, we should hear no “city’s hum” at mid-day. My caique is the only busy thing about.

I do not care the least for the hottest day here. With my straw-hat filled with vine-leaves, the best defence against the sun, and my small and dripping white umbrella, immediately after bathing, I start on some pleasant little excursion. The Apple-blossom, who is really an institution as Mr. Smythe says, packs up my luncheon, which Johannachi carries in a little basket. It usually consists of part of a chicken, hidden away in cool limetree leaves, bread, and a fine melon or bunch of grapes. There is almost always a pleasant breeze, even in the middle of the day; the sea sparkles so brightly—the waves dash round the rocks with such a pleasant sound, the ‘Edith Belina’ bounds so delightfully from point to point—the mountains look so enchanting in the distance—that, lying on a comfortable cushion, with a book by my side and no present care at my heart, I feel as gay and as inclined to wander on as the water and air about me. Sometimes I make the boatmen row as close in to the rocks as possible. These are wonderful in variety of shape and colour, and what beautiful tints they throw on the water! Sometimes from the deepest recesses, wild-doves and pigeons fly, startled by the sound of our oars, and then stop to coo in the next place where cool water gurgles in the shade.

Wild festoons of seaweed shade these pretty clefts above; below, sea-anemones and seaweeds of most vivid and beautiful green harbour swarms of many-tinted fish, which fly, startled, as you pass. Now and then you find a creek abounding with several kinds of pretty shells, and here and there a charming spot where heath and cistus and arbutus grow down to the very edge of the rocks. I should not dislike much to be a Byzantine banished princess, provided they left me in peace here with a good caique, and with liberty to do as I liked, and allowed Mr. Frank Buckland to pass a day or two with me occasionally. How startled the civilized world would be with tales of the lizards, rats, tortoises, crickets, seaweeds, butterflies, ants, and frogs of this peculiarly favoured spot!

But I must hasten to tell you what you wished to know,—how one passes a long summer's day in the 'Islands of the Blest.' Well, sometimes I point to a small bay, about half-way round the island. My sturdy rowers pull rapidly in. The Monastery of St. George, perched on the very highest peak of mountain above, looks no bigger than a doll's house, left there by some spiteful fairy, to be shaken by winter tempests and scorched by summer glare. Walking a few paces over the white sand of the creek, you cross a low hedge-bank into the deep shade of some ancient fig-trees. This is the garden of the Monastery. The lay

Brother must be an active person I should think, if he descends the mountain every morning for the ascetic salads. The gardener is a remarkably fine, picturesque old Greek ; he always comes to meet me, attended by his two wild, shaggy dogs, helps the boatmen to bring the cushions from the caique, and carefully picks out the coolest bit of shade under the wide-spreading fig-tree. He keeps a nice piece of matting, and some antique-shaped earthen water-jars of spring water, always ready for the use of occasional visitors to his creek. The garden does not seem to be very productive, tomatas being the principal crop, with here and there a patch of Indian corn, or a pomegranate-tree, and wild-looking vines trailing about, more remarkable for beauty than promise. The fig-trees are evidently the glory and richness of the place, and beautiful trees they are ; their massive and deep green leaves just letting in enough golden sunlight to make pleasant shadows beneath. Johannachi spreads the luncheon with great glee, Janko and Pandalij search with the old gardener for the finest figs, while I stroll away to the hedgerow ont he beach, in search of specimens for my collection of island plants. Hundreds of butterflies and beetles and strange-looking purple bees are humming over a large scented plant with a lilac blossom, of which I know nothing, except that the leaf very much resembles that of a lupine. I must

send a piece to my old friend and teacher of botany in pleasant days ‘lang syne,’ Dr. Arthur Hassall. After luncheon I sit and read. What thorough enjoyment it is, and how often I wish it were possible you could spend a morning with me! Having risen so early, by eleven o’clock I begin to feel tired, and generally enjoy a sound sleep on the cushions under the fig-tree; the caïquejees slumbering profoundly meanwhile in the ‘Edith Belina,’ and my tiny guard Johannachi either discussing melons and figs, or playing in the garden with the old man’s dogs. By the bye, the gardener’s summer dwelling-place particularly struck me the first time of seeing it. Two or three planks were placed across some stout benches in the middle of an ancient fig-tree, opposite to those under which I am sitting. A Turkish quilt is neatly folded up upon them. Above this primitive bed, a piece of thick matting is hung, as a screen in case of a shower. Two or three brackets of rough wood are nailed up within reach. On one is a water-jar, on another a horn spoon. The poor old man’s slippers are neatly placed on a small piece of matting at the foot of the tree, and two or three ancient garments hang on a broken branch close by. This fig-tree completely tells the story of his simple life and few wants,—pleasant enough, I should think, in that lovely spot, with his faithful dogs and cheerful garden-work, had he books, and a knowledge

of them. If I ever turn recluse, it shall be in the Princes' Isles. In fact, the East must be a most perfect refuge for any one tired of "the world," or not having enough to exist on in it. How much better a garden and cave, or fig-tree here, with a knowledge of "simples," a reputation of being "uncanny," and the tender regard of the country-people in consequence (who would provide melons, and figs, and rice, in consideration and out of respect for your necromancy and your star-gazings towards Olympus), than the paltry battle of life in a great city! I think I shall set about founding a sect of female Dervishes, composed of ill-used, distressed governesses, companions, and portionless daughters,—kind, pitying young Dervishesses, who would put by their musings and missals, and cross a mountain now and then, to help the poor, ignorant, helpless people who believe in them. The Superiors should be elected from the sensible girls who preferred this sort of life to a *mariage de convenance*, or to an undignified dependence. What do you think of my plan? I know one or two young ladies to whom I should very much like to propose it. Fancy Louisa or Stella, attired in serge, in my fig-tree! One has plenty of time to dream away here,—different from the constant movement and occupation of life in England. With a few dear friends within reach, this calm and freedom would be perfect.

But I must continue my account of a day in the Islands.

By the time the sun begins to dip a little, we gather up cushions and books, and rouse the boatmen. Johannachi and I ramble on shore while the ‘Edith Belina’ is made ready. Sometimes we find shells for Edith’s collection, sometimes small pieces of malachite. Oh, if Danby could see the glow of purple and gold over the sands and rocks, and over our pretty caïque and her Greeks!

We run away in that gorgeous light, waving an adieu to the kind old man and his dogs, who stand with friendly waggings at his side. He little knows what a picture he makes there, standing on the shore until we are almost out of sight. We soon land in our own creek, almost as lonely as Robinson Crusoe’s; but by the time I reach the top of the hill, I see that all the beauty and fashion of Prinkipo is astir again. The steamer is seen coming in from Pera, and Greek and Armenian ladies, with bright parasols over their heads, are hastening down to the ‘Magyar,’ at the pier, to meet their husbands and brothers, to smoke cigarettes, drink lemonade and sherbet, and eat walnuts, ready cracked and peeled, which are handed about in glasswater-jars by dirty Greek boys, at about twenty a piastre.

The ‘Magyar’ is a kind of open-air coffeehouse, which from morning till night is seldom quite deserted, but which is crowded with men, women, and

children of an evening, when there is generally some kind of barbarous music as an accompaniment to the smoking. I never notice much conversation going on. The men are drinking *raki* among themselves,—the women, bedizened with all their little stock of finery, Eastern and European, staring at the men, but particularly at passing strangers. They really do not seem as if they had *esprit* enough to plague each other, or even to talk scandal! It is an amusing scene for once; but once is enough, for there is much that is painful. There is a Greek girl of seventeen, who ought to be extremely beautiful, and naturally as pale as marble. She has heard of English ball-dresses, and perhaps heard the English complexion admired, so she has thrown off the beautiful Greek dress in which I am told she looked lovely a year ago, put on an ill-made low dress, and painted her cheeks a light brickdust colour. Then come long rows of Armenian and Greek ladies, stars of fashion and caricatures of the worst style of French dress; then ancient dames, who, discarding the trowsers of old, have adopted half measures, and content themselves with flounced dresses,—retaining the fery or handkerchief on the head, and indulging occasionally in a cigarette; then children, poor little things, dressed up in the most ridiculous manner in the world, so bedizened that you can scarcely see them, and the dirt beneath the finery,

—then a grave Turk or two walking quietly apart,—Greek nurses,—sherbet- and fruit-sellers,—noisy boys, dogs, waiters and caiques,—all huddled up in a close atmosphere of tobacco and *raki*. There are three or four Magyars at Prinkipo. The largest is close to the Pier,—merely a covered way, but this is the most fashionable, as the ladies vie with one another for the foremost places on the benches, and little wooden stools, so that they may be well seen by those who arrive by the steamer. But there is one very pretty Magyar in the heart of the village: it is held under the wide-spreading branches of a magnificent plane-tree; a wooden seat is fixed all round the “giant bole,” and dozens of little wooden stools are scattered about within the shade. At night the lower boughs are lighted up with lamps, and the picturesque groups of smokers and coffee-drinkers are really very striking in the broad light and shadow. Quaint, tumble-down rows of wooden houses lie in the shade on either side; here and there is a cafaneè, filled with noisy drinkers, and lighted with the fitful glare of torches. Rows of silent Greek and Armenian ladies may be made out, sitting under the old trellised vines outside—perhaps listening to the most horrid scraping and groaning of the “Band” opposite; perhaps enjoying themselves, but they do not give any evidence of it. There are two or three beauties here

this season; but, except to Greek eyes, it is difficult to discover them by the glaring and irregular light of the tree lamps at the Magyar, even when dozens of *madahs* are burning in their honour. The *madahs* are torches, which burn with a blue light not very favourable to any style of beauty but a spectral one.

When an admirer wishes to please the object of his particular devotion for the evening, he whispers to the master of the cafanée to burn so many piastres' worth of *madahs* opposite such and such a bench. The motley crowds strolling up and down the houses, the smokers, the rows of ladies, and above all *the* Beauty, are instantly lighted up in a glare of the most unearthly hue. The dark eyes of all the other ladies turn with envy to the object of this homage; the adorer makes a profound Eastern bow towards the bench on which she is seated. It is almost dark again, but the fiddlers scrape on. The next morning you hear people say, "So-and-so had two hundred *madahs* burned for her last night by So-and-so." I have heard that twenty or thirty pounds have on particular occasions been spent by a rich and enthusiastic young Greek for a very great Beauty; but an ordinary amount of gallantry is expressed in a few piastres' worth of blue light. When kind Lord Lyons brought all his midshipmen down here for a treat the other day, he burned so many *madahs*, in honour of the

ladies generally, that half the heads in the Islands were turned by this homage from the great English Admiral. His Lordship left about ten o'clock, in a beautifully illuminated steamer, which we watched far on its way back to Constantinople. The boys were delighted with the trip, and their loud huzzas were heard on shore when the vessel was some distance out at sea. The word *madah* means 'moonlight,' but I am afraid Endymion would be disgusted at the very idea of a Magyar. In hot weather it is kept up all night. I do not know how late the ladies stay, but the men gamble and drink raki and smoke hour after hour. Often when the fresh dawn is breaking, I still hear the discordant notes of the droning music, borne over the water from Halki. I suppose this is a Greek form of pleasure.

We have been down to the village in an evening three or four times, just to see what was going on. The first night of our arrival, it was a kind of annual festival, when a caique is burned on the shore, as a peace-offering to malignant sea-spirits. The blaze of the burning boat spread far and wide, and groups of fishermen and caiquejees in their picturesque dress were very striking. They afterwards joined hands, and forming a wide ring danced round, to a rude and measured kind of chanting. Their movements were extremely awkward and clownish, and the shouting

anything but harmonious,—but this, I was told, was ancient Romaika. The whole scene would have been very fine on a vase.

But I must say adieu, having had a tiring day. I came home at about mid-day from Maltapè, a village on the opposite shore, and have not stirred from my desk since. The steamer is very near the island, and I see the caïque with its little red flag going out to meet her at Halki, which saves Edmund the steep walk up hither from the village.

Our caïquejees make it a point of honour for our boat to be first, and woe betide any caïque which attempts to pass the ‘Edith Belina!’ What a strain she gets for nothing! Mr. W. Tyrone Power is coming down again today, to stay a day or two,—at least if the mosquitos will allow him. We find him an extremely agreeable companion. He has just come from Circassia, and has charmed me with his account of its shepherd warriors. There the mountaineer defends his own family,—makes not only his own powder, but his own gun,—shoes and dresses his own horse,—shoots his own particular Russian enemy,—is remarkable for beauty, hardihood and intelligence! I shall ask more about them, and about the renowned Chief, Schamyl, when we stroll by the seaside in the quiet part of the island this evening, for so will end our day. We always stay to watch the

beautiful tints on the mountains and waves while they last, and then return home to tea. As soon as it is dark, fishing caiques appear with lights on board, which are used to decoy a particular kind of fish. They look so pretty, rising and falling on the sea in the soft grey of night. But again adieu! I have had a long gossip with you today, my dear Mr. Hornby.

LETTER XXVII.

EXCURSION TO MALTAPÈ.—GREEK WOMEN AND TURKISH CAPANÉE.
—MARBLE FOUNTAIN.—ANCIENT TREE.—THE MOSQUE.—THE
IMAUM.—VILLAGE SCHOOL.—TURKISH WOMEN.—CURIOSUS LAMP.

The Islands, August 28th, 1856.

My dear Mr. Hornby,

My last excursion was with Mr. Gisborne to Maltapè, a fishing-village on the Asiatic coast opposite. There are several larger ones further inland, nestling in the sides of the mountain, but it would not be safe to go so far without a strong escort. Some brigands robbed and murdered a poor man from Halki there, but a few days ago. They supposed that he had a large sum of money about him, and said they were very sorry he was shot, as he lay dying upon the ground! His companion was allowed to depart in peace, with many polite expressions of regret. Since hearing this, I take Eugenio with me well armed whenever I go to Maltapè. It is a pleasant sail across when we get a fair wind. The fishermen's children

playing on the shore run down to the crazy little wooden pier of Maltapè to see us come in ; some of them are pretty little creatures, but sadly neglected and dirty. Numbers of the youngest were mere babes, sleeping in the sand by the wooden walls of the Cafanée, beside the street dogs, who had scraped themselves comfortable nests there. Squalid, wretched-looking Greek women peeped out of the broken casements of their tumble-down wooden houses at us. Some of them might have been extremely handsome, but hard work, poor food, and utter neglect had only left a harsh outline of the fine features which nature had given them. Such women at twenty have lost all trace of youth. Don't talk of witches, until you have seen some of the old ones ! Many of the girls of ten or twelve here are beautiful,—at least *would be*, if they were washed, and their long plaits of rough black hair combed. Lower down on the shore, numbers of the womankind of Maltapè were gathering fish in baskets from some large caïques ; others were washing coarse garments in the waves, which came rippling gently round their bare feet. A few idle young girls, with gay handkerchiefs on their heads, were lolling in the sun at their doors, before which some brigand-looking Greeks were smoking on benches, under the usual trellis and vine-tree.

Further on was a Turkish cafanée, and three or

four Turks were calmly enjoying their narghilies. They were of the old school, and looked majestic in their beards and turbans. We sat down at a little distance, and Eugenio brought us coffee from the curious old China fireplace within. We bowed, and they bowed ; they seemed to enjoy our society, and we enjoyed theirs ; we enjoyed the view of sea and land, so did they ; language did not seem to be of the least consequence to such dignified, thoughtful people. The only sound was the ripple of the waves on the shore, the gurgle of the narghilies at their feet, and the twitter of swallows, so tame that they sat on a little wooden ledge just above the heads of the men, and on the rails of the bench beside them. It was quite touching to see the confidence which they showed in these kind and simple people. We paid the quaint master of the cafanée for the coffee, (I believe Eugenio had solaced himself with a chibouque in some mysterious corner,) and then went to explore the centre of the village, leaving the boatmen to enjoy themselves after their own hearts in a rough wooden crafanée overhanging the sea, where they could meditate amid clouds of smoke on the superior merits of the 'Edith Belina' dancing below, over those of all other caiques, fishing or otherwise.

In the very heart of the village, shaded by a fine

old tree, stands a large fountain of white marble, with inscriptions all round. It must once have been a very fine one, but is fallen sadly to decay ; weeds and rank grass grow on the top, overhang the once illuminated letters, and stop the course of the water, which streams over the ground, instead of flowing into the little open tanks designed for the use of the thirsty traveller by the Hadji (pilgrim) who built it. Some Greek girls were filling their pitchers there, and a sturdy villager looking on. We begged Eugenio to say to him what a pity we thought it that they did not repair such a magnificent fountain,—it might be so easily done. It now flooded the principal path, and gave the women who came to draw water so much difficulty in wading through the mud, especially the poor girls with bare feet. He answered all we could say to rouse his pride, or humanity, or common sense, with a shrug of the shoulders ; which I suppose the whole village of them would do.

Opposite the fountain, on the other side of the square which forms the centre of the place, is one of the most magnificent old trees I have ever seen, evidently of great antiquity. Its branches are prodigious. Round the trunk is the usual rude wooden bench ; and two or three rows of benches placed further out have no doubt received the principal part of the villagers of an evening, through many generations of smokers and

coffee-drinkers, long since passed away. Close by is a raised fireplace for making coffee, and supplying charcoal to light the pipes: it is made of clay and stones, and lined with blue tiles of a curious pattern.

This is a most primitive and interesting old place, poor and ruinous as it is; and, as if to complete the picture formed by the ancient trees, and fountain, and hearth, a rude waggon crossed the square as we sat there, drawn by two snow-white oxen, strangely yoked and adorned, and led by a gem of an old Turk, white beard, rich turban and all. How I wish that some great artist would come here, that the eyes of generations to come might be charmed with these Old World nooks, and with the harmony and richness of colouring, and the dignity of bearing among a few of the people still remaining, which is rapidly disappearing before Western progress, and its hideous "civilized" attire! But the crazy ox-car rumbled and groaned on towards the fields, out of sight, and the picture of a thousand years ago is gone, with many regrets on my part that I can only give you this faint idea of it with my pen. As for myself, if I never see the East again, I have but to shut my eyes to possess a picture gallery. But I ought to tell you that, even knowing your tastes as I do, my heart has sometimes failed me a little in writing these long letters, when I think of the people who have visited the same places, and made the same

excursions as myself, who have seen nothing in them, and whose account would only agree with mine as to the wretched appearance of the villages and the people. However I can only write as my own eyes see things, and according to the impression which the country has produced on my own mind; and as it amuses you all, there will be no great harm done.

The mosque of the village is a very small one, for the population consists principally of Greeks. There was a kind of open porch before it, and we sat down to rest. The door of the mosque was open, so presently I put off my shoes and walked in, very much to the surprise of a poor Turk, who was doing something to the lamps in a very desponding way. The mosque looked very shabby and very poor. Over the pulpit is suspended the usual piece of carved wood, shaped like a minaret. Hoop-shaped lamps, and numbers of large painted ostrich eggs, hang from the ceiling. On my return to the porch, the Imaum himself came, saluted us, and making us a sign to be seated, sat down himself on the opposite bench, filled his chibouque, and evidently prepared for a chat. Eugenio, who speaks Turkish, interpreted the conversation, which amounted to—We were welcome—Where did we come from?—and a desire to hear all about the English troops,—Was it really true that war with Russia had ended? We told him all the military in-

telligence we knew, and then in our turn asked who built the fine marble fountain close by, and who left it to decay? Hadji somebody, a very famous pilgrim, built it, he said, only about a hundred years ago. He, the Hadji, was a great benefactor to the village altogether; but now it was very poor, and there were but few of his religion in it, to keep up the mosque and fountain. I was glad to find that he was concerned at a stranger seeing it in such neglect and decay. It is one of the saddest things here to find how little the people care generally either for the past or the future. "If I were the Sultan, I would repair the old mosques and fountains, instead of building new ones," I said to our new friend, who only shook his head and smiled a placid Eastern smile, as he caressed his chibouque. It seems like talking against destiny to wish anything saved from ruin here!

As we sat quietly talking, I heard a kind of chanting in children's voices, not very far off, and asked what it was. The Imaum replied that it was the little ones of his school, learning their lessons. I said I should very much like to see a Turkish school. He said kindly that it was but a poor one, but that I was most welcome. Accordingly we crossed a small ruined court, and entered the walls of a building which had evidently been burnt, all but the stones and mortar, years before. Up a crazy stair-

case, made of rough deal, we crept to a sort of loft, the planks of which were so wide apart that you could plainly see through to the ruin beneath. The stairs were so shaky, I fully expected that Mr. Gisborne, myself, the Imaum, the Muezzin who followed, Eugenio and all, would fall through together. However we got into the schoolroom in safety, and the sight of it was well worth the trouble. It was neatness itself, though the only window was unglazed, and the deal walls only adorned here and there with pieces of rough pasteboard, on which were inscribed texts from the Koran. Two planks were placed about a foot from the ground, down the centre of the room, and some very charming little girls sat at either side of one of them, and seven or eight boys at the other. They all sat cross-legged on white sheepskins: each had a book before him, and the Imaum explained that each was chanting the same verse of the Koran, until they all knew it by heart. I should think that none of them were more than seven or eight years of age. Nothing could be more charming than the behaviour of the little girls. The one at the end of the row, and nearest to me, motioned me to take a seat on her sheepskin, upon my asking what they were learning, and my question being translated to her. Pointing out the verse, she chanted it softly over. Seeing that it pleased us, the dear little things all took it up, and repeated it over and over,

until the Imaum, smiling at the door, evidently said, “Enough!” The girls all pressed round my sheepskin, to show their neat books, and the boys soon joined the little crowd. The Imaum tried to call them off, but Mr. Gisborne, as well as myself, was delighted, and they soon laughed freely and seemed much amused with strangers—about as rare to them as white camels, I suppose. I asked the name of my partner in the sheepskin; “Ayesha,” she said, raising her shy dark eyes to mine. I assure you this child was perfectly beautiful,—her eyes and lashes wonderful, her simple manners and grace more enchanting than those of the sweetest fabled princess you ever dreamed of. I held her hand, as we sat on the little mat; poor child, I could not take my eyes off her, thinking of her probable fate in that miserable village. I could not make up my mind to leave her, and said to Eugenio, “Ask her if she will come to England with me.” Her rich, soft Turkish sounded so musically as she uttered the simple and touching words; “I am the only child of my mother, or I would.” One or two other of the little girls were extremely pretty, with long plaits of dark hair nearly reaching to the ground, but not to be compared with Ayesha. The boys were sturdy little fellows; I asked all their names,—one was called Hamed, another Mahommed. They were coarsely dressed, but

very tidy and clean, and one or two were adorned with bright scarlet fezzes. Altogether the school did the poor Imaum great credit, and the children seemed very happy and good under his gentle rule. He made them chant some favourite verse for me, which I was sorry not to understand. But at last we were obliged to say good bye, even to Ayesha, and left them all looking very happy at the little fist-full of piastres which Mr. Gisborne asked leave of the good Imaum to give to each.

We then walked far along the shore, sending the 'Edith Belina' round to meet us at a large garden there. The men brought out the cushions and the luncheon, which Eugenio spread under the shade of a plane-tree. It was a very pretty spot; for a large vine had festooned itself round the tree, and its long tendrils waved in the cool sea-breeze. Close by was an enormous well, with an old Egyptian water-wheel, like those which are used on the Nile. Two or three poor Turkish women were gathering a few tomatas in the garden, which seemed to belong to the village. I gave them some grapes, and some white bread, and they seemed inclined to be very sociable with me, but, although veiled, would come near nothing masculine; —so, as I could get no interpreting from Eugenio, our mutual friendliness was limited to smiles, signs of regret, and a wave of adieu. How glad I should

be to speak Turkish well! I think Mr. Gisborne enjoyed his ramble very much. We sailed home in a magnificent sunset; the water blue, the sky and mountains, every shade of rose-colour.

I had almost forgotten to tell you that the kind Imaum gave me a curious little lamp, such as they use in the mosques at Ramazan and other festivals: it is of a coarse kind of porcelain, something in the shape of a pine-apple, with little holes for small wax candles all round it. He tells me that in rich mosques they are made of gold or silver. I assured him that I should prize this one very much, which seemed to please him. What do you think of this conquest of a Giaour over a true Believer,—on the Asiatic coast too!

LETTER XXVIII.

OLD CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES.—ANCIENT MANUSCRIPT.—
TOMB OF ST. GEORGE.—PICTURE OF ST. GEORGE AND THE
DRAGON.—DONKEY PROCESSIONS.—A GREEK BEAUTY.—THE SU-
PERIOR OF THE MONASTERY.—CURIOUS PAINTINGS.—LEGEND.—
LUNATICS.—TREE-FROGS.

Prinkipo, September 2nd, 1856.

My dear Sister,

I SEND you this account of another day of my idle life here, because I know you like anything appertaining to old churches and monasteries, and because whenever I visit them, the only drawback is that you are not with me. Of course you know that there is nothing in an architectural point of view, as Mr. Pecksniff would say, to admire in either; but they are so beautifully situated, contain so many relics of the earliest days of Christianity, and old in themselves, have so risen out of the ashes of the very earliest persecuted Christian churches, and, with all their poor tinsel, and false carving, and daubed pictures of

Saints, they carry the mind so vividly back to past centuries, that one cannot but feel a very deep and peculiar interest in them. I felt this most strongly at Jesu Cristo, when my good friend the monk there unlocked from an ancient chest, and allowed me to look over, a copy of the Scriptures, written on a kind of parchment, and, according to the tradition, dating even from the days of the Apostles themselves. The Brotherhood has had some difficulty in keeping this manuscript, but, though very poor, never yielded to the temptation of selling it. Its value is however lessened by the shameful conduct of a Russian traveller, who upon being shown it some years ago, contrived unseen to cut away a leaf here and there. The other monasteries here possess no manuscripts of any antiquity. They were all destroyed when Byzantium fell into the hands of the Moslems, the monks tell me; but at St. Nicholas at Prinkipo, and St. George at Halki, are some very old and curious crosses of silver and carved wood, although the jewels with which they were once adorned have been taken out ages ago.

I have been three times to the Monastery of St. George here, founded by the celebrated Empress Irene. The first day I asked if they could show me her tomb. One of the three monks pointed out an ancient-looking sarcophagus of white stone, evidently

of considerable antiquity, above which a silvered picture of St. George had been placed. One half of this massive tomb was outside the wall of the church, so that it was evidently of older date than the church itself; and why the wall was built so, one cannot conceive. There is a mutilated inscription running round the base of the tomb, which unfortunately I could make nothing of, and had no means of copying. Eugenio emphatically declared the characters to be old *Turkish!* Since my better acquaintance with the Superior, or Papa, he assures me that the present church does *not* stand on the site of the original one; and one day, conducting me about two minutes' walk over the rocks looking towards the Olympian range, discovered among the huge masses, what now seemed a small cavern, almost entirely filled up with ponderous fragments. It was difficult to judge whether these had been hewn by the hand of man or not. On a smoother slab of granite lay a ragged quilt, and this he told me belonged to a poor pilgrim just arrived, who was sleeping there, and who believed, with many others, in the legend, that *this* was the true altar of St. George of Irene. So I am afraid it is very doubtful whether the tomb which they show in the church is that of the Empress, which is said to have been *within the walls of her church*. The inscription may clear up the mystery, and the monk has promised to copy it

for me. He gave me the other day an exact copy in outline of the ancient picture of St. George and the Dragon, which is preserved in a case over the gateway. It is a very curious production: St. Peter stands by, in a kind of tower in the sky, watching the contest between the knight and the dragon. He lolls his head on one side in a most comical manner, and holds his keys in his hand, which hangs over the side of the tower; he is evidently anxious to let the conqueror in, as soon as the fight is ended. I will send you the drawing; pray take care of it.

Miss Barker and I spent yesterday at the Monastery, riding up the mountain on donkeys. We walked through the pretty French camp, and admired the neat wooden houses which the soldiers have built for their sick officers in the most lovely situations among fir-trees overhanging the sea. At a little distance in the valley below is their cemetery, which is carefully walled round, and planted with rows of simple wooden crosses, like those in the Crimea. The East has gathered many dead from distant places since the war began. The few French troops remaining here are soon to embark on their return home; so they have been busy planting and adorning the graves of those they leave behind for ever. The view of the sea and distant mountains and islands is most beautiful here.

Miss Barker and I sat down on a bench under

some old fir-trees, near the convent of San Nicoa ; and, while we rested our dapples, listened to a gay French air, whistled from a tent close by, where two wounded, or rather convalescent, soldiers were amusing themselves by persuading a starling to imitate them. It is quite curious to see the pains which soldiers take with their pets. We sat a long time here ; for several donkey processions appeared, winding down the ravine before us, and we did not wish our little beasts to carry us amongst them, as they infallibly would have done if they could, being accustomed to scamper along, helter-skelter, in large bodies. These donkey processions are really most amusing to watch, as they wind about all parts of the island,—some rapidly, some slowly, according as the expedition may be one of pleasure or sanctity. Here comes a pretty little girl, in a Greek jacket and straw-hat, foremost of a party : she is mounted astride on a large black donkey, which is adorned with scarlet trappings, and a gay charm of blue beads against the Evil Eye, for he is sleek and comely ; two little brothers in fezzes scamper after, trying to pass her at a narrow turn of the rock. Jolting along, also astride, and calling to them to stop, comes the mamma, her gay and wide-flounced dress so completely covering the animal on which she is seated, that only its tiny hoofs are visible, ambling along.

Next comes a fat, joyous-looking Greek girl, who is evidently the nurse. Her donkey is rushing down the steepest part of the ravine, and her saddle has slipped all on one side; but she tucks a mild, passive-looking baby fearlessly under one arm, while she grasps the reins, a formidable stick, and a coloured handkerchief full of pomegranates, with the other. This young lady shows more of her legs than I well could describe, and rides after the same safe and independent fashion as the rest.

Far behind, comes the *Paterfamilias*, pale and grave, and looking steadily on the ground, which his long legs nearly touch. A wild-looking Greek servant-boy brings up the rear, evidently carrying the provisions. I daresay they are going to spend the day at San Giorgio, and we shall meet them jogging back to the village by sunset.

But presently came by a most devout-looking old lady, of large dimensions, with a very rich handkerchief and heavy plaits of hair bound round her head. She rode astride with a dignified air; but her stirrups were so short, that her knees were rather too high for perfect ease and grace; and I thought she looked rather disconcerted, when her beast wilfully chose the steepest places. She was evidently making a pilgrimage to the picture of a favourite Saint; for the bare-legged youth in a scarlet jacket,

running by her side, carried in his hand a huge waxen taper.

One thing that puzzles me in these donkey processions is, that the riders never seem to look either right or left, but press on, down ravines, and up mountains, by the seashore, and over the heath hills, looking straight between the ears of their wretched animals.

Sometimes you hear the clink of hoofs behind a rock, and round come perhaps half-a-dozen handsomely dressed Greek ladies, riding astride as solemnly as mutes, attended by as solemn-looking a gentleman or two ; all perfectly silent, and utterly regardless of the glorious sunset spreading over the sea and mountains around them. The only variety in the pursuit of island donkey-riding is, when two parties of the animals meet, and take it into their heads to rush together *pèle-méle* and fight, which they do desperately, making the most unearthly noises all the time. Some of the ladies scream—some of the men dismount ; the owners of the donkeys belabour them violently, with abundance of invectives ; a terrible cloud of dust is raised ; when at last one family cavalcade being collected winds one way, and the other another. I met a large party the other day, who had experienced a *contretemps* of this kind, and were just gravely riding out of it ; but they were some time be-

fore they got quite arranged again, for it was a party of pleasure, and they had mounted a Band to play before them, which had got scattered in the *mélée*; the different instruments, perhaps excited by mountain air or raki, perseveringly continuing to play among the braying of the delinquent asses, and at the most irregular distances from one another. I was particularly struck with the disgusted expression of the largest donkey of the musical party, who seemed to have headed the rebellion. His rider was playing the trombone, frightfully out of tune, close against the ears of the unfortunate animal, who showed what he thought of the infliction by laying them down flat on his neck and by making hideous grimaces.

There is now a Greek Beauty in the island, who has dozens of *madahs* burnt for her every night at the Magyar. I often meet her donkey party. She generally leads the way, being a dashing beauty, and as she is mounted on the largest and most adventurous donkey in Prinkipo, she is often far in advance of her mother, a ponderous old lady in green, with a yellow handkerchief on her head, who covers all but the ears and tail of the animal she bestrides. Several of the Beauty's retinue of admirers follow as best they may. Some of them manage to keep pretty close to her, but, curiously enough, we always afterwards pass her intended, a pale, desponding-look-

ing man, mounted on the most wretched donkey in the island, and so far behind as to be quite out of sight both of his bride and his rivals.

But to return to our morning at St. George's Monastery. Having kind Miss Barker to interpret, made the visit so much pleasanter. We found the Superior standing before the old gateway of the court yard of the monastery, throwing a few dried leaves to the flock of goats which came bounding over the vast piles of rock which lie heaped around. He is a fine, stern-looking man, his active energetic movements and long beard contrasting strangely with the old dark-blue satin petticoat peeping out from beneath his black outer robe. A few rough tools were lying on a bench beside him : he had been patching up a little, he said apologetically, against the winter storms, for the place had not been repaired for years, and the brotherhood here was too poor to spend any money on workmen. Their goats, he said, were almost all they had to depend upon in winter, besides the produce of the garden at the foot of the mountain, of which an immense heap of tomatas were drying in the sun : it must be a hard and lonely life. I asked if he had copied me the inscription on the old tomb. He has not yet found time, but promises to do so. We went into the church, and he showed us a very curious cross, of great antiquity. It is about

seven inches in length, and the frame is of light and delicate filagree-work, exquisitely wrought and designed. The hollow centre is composed of minute figures in carved cedar, of our Saviour, the Virgin Mary, and the Apostles on one side, and of several Saints and Martyrs on the other. There are holes for jewels all round, and a few small ones still remain. On particular days this cross is placed on the altar of St. George, above the old tomb, where a lamp is always burning. We were particularly amused with an old picture in honour of St. George, which hangs in a remote part of the church. Crowned kings, pilgrims, queens in gorgeous array, children, and beggars, are seated stiffly round a tank of water, supposed to have sprung from the favourite well of the Saint. Some of the ladies certainly look rather tipsy, especially one seated near a very jolly-looking and roysterous king, whose crown is too big for him. All are lifting up their hands and eyes, or in some way or other expressing a comical kind of surprise in the miraculously healing effect of the draughts they are quaffing.

This picture, offered to St. George after a cure performed at his shrine here, cost a great deal of money, and was considered a very fine one, the monk said. There is one at Halki, by the bye, still more famed, which I saw the other day; it represents

the temptations of this life, heaven, and purgatory, and is hung up in a covered court in front of the church, before the benches on which the brothers sit to meditate—or smoke. The immense number of figures on the canvas, and the glaring colours, make the homily difficult to read by unpractised eyes; but I know that there is a bright blue river of life, winding like a snake between a land of imps and demons on one side, and a company of saints and angels on the other. The devils are urging the travellers to step their way; the saints do not interfere much, but sit in stiff rows in a garden of orange and myrtle trees not nearly so tall as themselves. Their paradise looks very formal, and extremely uninviting. Down below, is a kind of cave, and a select party of demons of all colours are busily employed in tormenting their unhappy captives in the most jocular manner possible. One of them, in a burst of merriment, is grilling half-a-dozen over the bars of a huge gridiron; another, stirring up a seething cauldron. A small party of brilliant wits are pouring melted brimstone, and streams of flame down the throats of their agonized victims; while others, looking on, rest on their forks in ecstasies of delight, or cut the most ridiculous capers.

Though you will have had enough by this time of Greek pictures, I must tell you about the St. George

in this place. The whole of the picture, except the swarthy face of the saint, is covered with silver, barbarously enough laid on. It is said to be the original picture belonging to Irene's church; and the legend adds, said one monk, that it was buried by one of the ancient brotherhood, when Constantinople was taken and its Christian churches razed. Many sacred treasures were so preserved in those days. A young shepherd of Prinkipo, two or three centuries later, sleeping on the mountain, dreamed that St. George appeared to him, and directing him to dig on the exact spot where he lay, assured him that he would there find the long-lost picture of his shrine. Of course the shepherd dug, and of course he discovered the picture, which he restored to the present church, since which time it has been famous for miraculous cures, especially in all kinds of madness. The shepherd left his flock, turned monk, and ultimately died Superior of this Monastery, and in great odour of sanctity. The well of St. George is close by the church. A small stone cell has been built over it, with seats hewn in the rock for the use of the pilgrims. We drank some of the water, which the monk drew up for us, and presented in the iron cups. It was very cold, but our friend assured us gravely that it would do us good.

Tied to a nail in the wall of the cell, was a large

bunch of hair of all colours, from roughest black to the lightest gold. These are offerings shown from the heads of pilgrims, who have been cured by the healing waters of the Saint. They look so dreary, waving to and fro in the wind, so unlikely to please the spirit of *our* cheerful Knight, St. George! Afterwards, when I went to the Church again, to look at a stone belonging, they said, to the old Convent, I asked the Monk what the large iron rings were for, in the pavement before the shrine. At first he did not seem to like to answer, but at length said that they were used to *chain the lunatics to*, who were sent up the mountain to be cured! Can you imagine anything more horrible? By an iron collar fixed round the neck, they are sometimes chained to these rings for three days and three nights, until from struggling and exhaustion, or cold—perhaps all these together, they sink down on the stones before the picture of the Saint, who is then supposed to have cured the paroxysm. Can you conceive anything more barbarous?

We sat down to have our luncheon under the old walnut-tree in the court-yard. The poor starved cats and dogs about the place looked wistfully at us, and we gave them a right good meal. The Papa would not sit down with us; he said he was fasting, though he did not certainly look so, but an old woman belonging to the Monastery who milked the goats and

made the cheese, and who looked as black and dried up as the picture of any Greek Saint of old, waited upon us, croaking out all sorts of questions about England and the War, and ending by being quite friendly; directing Eugenio where he could find some fine figs to add to our repast. He brought back with him a small tortoise, which he had caught under the tree : it has a beautifully marked shell, and is evidently very old ; it *may* even have raised its tiny eyes to the great banished Queen, standing on these lonely rocks before the glorious view of sea and mountain, and thinking on “the various turns of fate below.” I shall call it “Irene.”

While we were looking at the tortoise, a young Greek who had been wandering listlessly about the gallery came up to us. He looked ill and wan, and we offered him a pear. I thought he snatched it in rather an odd way, and on looking at him more attentively, saw that he had an iron collar round his neck, and a gash on one of his cheeks, which it sickened one to think of. He seemed perfectly quiet and harmless then, but the Priest came angrily up, and speaking roughly to him in Greek, drove him away across the court, opened the door of a shed, and shut him in. I noticed that he did not turn the key, and watching an opportunity, I ran across the court, opened the door, and went in. There the poor crea-

ture lay, on a heap of rubbish, with a ragged coverlid beside him. When the door was shut, the place must have been perfectly dark, for there was neither window nor opening of any kind, and it seemed to have been formed out of some ruined stone building or cell. Fancy his solitary, hopeless days there, when quite sane, as they say he often is ! He looked up surprised when I spoke, but did not stir. I think he understood Italian. I offered him a pear, which he did not take, until I said, "Do eat another!" and then he stretched out his thin hand and smiled. He seemed to watch the sunlight very wistfully, which streamed in at the open door as I stood there, and I shall never forget the pain it cost me to shut it out from him. I have since made many inquiries about these poor unfortunates, and find that their treatment is the fault of their superstition, and not that of any particular priest. Mothers, fully believing in miraculous cures before the shrine, send up their sons to receive this treatment, paying a trifling sum for board ; and the patients themselves, when they feel an attack of their malady coming on, will endeavour to return of their own accord. However I am happy to say that St. George has now but two patients, and we saw several empty rooms within the gallery, which the old woman told us were once full of the richer class of patients and

pilgrims too, but which were now seldom used ; this last summer some grand English officers were lodging there, who had evidently quite won her ancient heart. We finished our day by quietly drinking coffee, seated on the mouldy divan of one of these apartments. I should have gone to sleep, as indeed we both tried to do ; but my tortoise, which I had tied to my wrist in a handkerchief, kept trying to escape, and Miss Barker was too much afraid of the countless pilgrim-fleas to close her eyes. So we looked again at the glorious view of the Sea of Marmora far below, and at the old walls and distant minarets of Constantinople glittering in the evening sun, and then prepared to depart.

It was a perfect calm, the sea like glass, and caiques threading their way about, looking no bigger than mosquitos, from the great height at which we were. The mountains, and hills, and vineyards looked so beautiful, that it made us grieve to think of the miserable degradation of everything else here. I brought my tortoise home in safety, and Johannachi has undertaken the charge of it,—an occupation just about suited to his intellect, poor little fellow ! He also helps me to catch flies, for the beautiful little tree-frogs which I brought from a piece of marshy ground on the coast near Maltapè, and which have become tame enough to spring off the branch we have fixed in a box for them, and

snatch their prey out of our fingers. Edmund takes great interest in these pretty little green fellows, and has stolen my best lace veil to hang before their door. But I am afraid we shall never be able to bring them home ; so we intend to let them out before we leave, which I suppose will be soon now. I told you that my dear little dog Fuad was lost. We have heard no tidings of him. Herbert Siborne has taken Arslan to England, and we have no pets now except a tame fly-catcher, which follows me everywhere, even into the vineyard, without wishing to stray. It had hurt one of its wings when I found it some weeks ago. Adieu! I have sent home by Herbert, who has kindly taken charge of a box for me, a motley little collection of curiosities. You will find three small antique vases from Tarsus, most kindly given to me by Mr. Hughes, who has just returned from thence,—a piece of fine carving, given me by a monk here, representing the Empress Irene and a robed priest holding a book,—a rosary of black beads from Jerusalem,—otto of roses fresh from Persia,—some Russian medals and crosses taken after the battles in the Crimea,—a piece of pink granite, and a piece of oak from the Dock-yard, at Sebastopol,—a Russian gunner's shoe, and several other things picked up in the Malakoff and Redan,—a pipe, made of the stone of Sebastopol by an English soldier,—a collection of dried plants,—an

Arab bride's ring,—three or four ancient silver coins,—some wood of aloes, the famous incense,—a little Damascus dagger,—a tin bottle of water from the Jordan,—a rose of Jericho,—and, above all, a cross made of olive-wood, cut from an old tree in the Garden of Gethsemane. The acorns are to be carefully raised in a pit: they are from the Forest of Belgrade, close to Lady Mary's house. I am very anxious about the safe arrival of my box.

LETTER XXIX.

THE LUNATIC AND THE PRIEST'S DONKEY.—APPEAL TO ST. DEMETRIUS.—THE LUNATIC SENT HOME.

Prinkipo, September 8th, 1856.

My dear Julia,

As I was sitting alone about mid-day yesterday, busily writing, I heard a knocking at the door of the Salamluk, which opens on to a rough path just cut on the mountain. A young Greek about seventeen was standing there, holding a donkey by the bridle. Both look tired, and I understood that the boy asked for water; so I called Eugenio, and told him to let them rest, and to see what they wanted. The donkey was laden with large branches of pomegranates and quinces, and had a coloured handkerchief-full of them tied round his neck. His master gave me the finest of the branches, and then sat down on the bench in the shade. Presently I heard an exclamation of surprise from the Apple-blossom. "What is the matter?" —"Oh, Signora! he is a madman, and is asking for

St. George." Poor fellow, we then saw the iron collar beneath his vest, and noticed his cut and bleeding feet and haggard looks. On a close inspection too, it turned out to be the Priest's sleek donkey, which looked so unusually hot and tired, from being dragged about in the burning sun. The poor boy kept asking for St. George, and seemed to have some indistinct idea of having lost his way. Kind-hearted Melia was deeply moved at his calling so imploringly on the Saint, and rushing to her room for her much prized, dirty little picture of St. Demetrius, brought it to him, fully believing that the sight of it would comfort or restore his wandering mind. But she pronounced him very bad indeed when he turned away, and asked me again for St. George. At last he suddenly seized the donkey's bridle, and starting off, tried to climb the steepest part of the mountain, dragging the poor little beast through bushes and rocks after him. The donkey seemed dreadfully distressed, and at last positively refused to go any further. I got Eugenio, and Signor Giacomo's strong Croat gardener, to get them both down, and then directed Eugenio to see them safely back to the Monastery by the right path. They started quietly enough, and Eugenio returned some time after, saying that he had guided them as far as the foot of the mountain, and that the poor young man was riding quietly on. I was vexed that he had

not gone the whole way, and lo ! presently back came the unfortunate creature, still asking for St. George, and almost fainting from fatigue and exhaustion. Melia and myself now kept him quietly on the bench, while Eugenio went for the Priest, who we heard was in the village, searching for his patient. The poor boy had escaped with the donkey since the morning before, had passed one night on the mountain, and all this time had been without food, unless he had eaten the unripe pomegranates and quinces with which he had laden his companion. He went back quietly enough with the Superior, who promised me that he should not be punished, which promise I sincerely trust he has kept. I shall go up to St. Giorgio in a day or two and ask after him. The bunch of pomegranates hanging up in my room makes my heart ache.

LETTER XXX.

VISIT FROM A TURKISH LADY.—HER TASTE FOR MUSIC.—HER NUBIAN SLAVE.—EXHIBITION OF AN ENGLISH GENTLEMAN.—GRATIFICATION AFFORDED BY THE SPECTACLE.

Constantinople, September 20th, 1856.

My dear Mother,

I HAD a visit yesterday from the Turkish lady whom I went to see some time ago with our Armenian neighbours. About ten in the morning Melia came running to say that a Harem was coming, and I quickly recognised my merry acquaintance through her thin yashmak, as she came up the garden-steps. She was attended by two pretty slaves, and by a hideous black woman, who led by the hand the lovely little girl whom I mentioned to you as crying after the jewels, the day of my visit to the Harem. They all put off their shoes at the foot of the stairs, and came up in the pointed-toed embroidered slippers beneath. As I knew the lady spoke Greek, Johannachi was instantly despatched with a note to my kind and constant

friend Miss Barker, who came down immediately. Melia hastened to serve coffee and sweetmeats.

I led the Cocona into my room to take off her yashmak and apple-green feridjee; she ran about like a pleased child come to have a holiday, looking at everything there; and the slaves followed her example. When we returned to the drawing-room, she sat down to the piano, as if to surprise me, and strummed in the most ludicrous manner for about half an hour, the slaves standing by with evident pride and satisfaction. She then rose, and begged to hear me play or sing. I never felt more puzzled in my life what to choose, but at last fixed on Blangini's 'Cara Elisa,' as simple and pretty, and began to sing. My guest was seated cross-legged on the divan behind me, so I could not see the effect of my favourite canzonetta upon her; but at the end of the first verse, the Nubian crossed the room, placed her black elbows on the piano, leaned her hideous face on them, and stared at me with such an intense expression of astonishment and disgust, that it was with the greatest difficulty I could keep my countenance. At last she uttered a dismal groan, and made such a frightful grimace, that I could resist no longer, and fairly burst out laughing. The Turkish lady seemed greatly relieved to be able to laugh too, and asked her favourite if she did not like English singing. "Horrible!"

said the Black, showing her white jackal-like teeth from ear to ear. "That is the way they sing at the Opera at Pera," said the lady. We asked how she knew. She said that her husband had been there one evening, and had described the singing to her. Pity my vanity, wounded in its tenderest point!

She then turned round quickly and asked where the gentlemen were. I replied that Mr. Hornby was gone to Stamboul, and Mr. Mansfield (who she knew was staying with us), to visit a friend at Pera. She said she was very sorry to hear this, as she had set her heart on seeing an English gentleman near, as she had only seen them passing in the street. Just at this moment she looked into the garden, and there, in an arbour, sat Mr. Rumball quietly reading. I did not know he was there. "*There is* an English gentleman," cried out my wilful guest; "pray ask him to come up, that I may see him." I replied as civilly as I could, that it was quite out of the question,—that the Effendi had trusted tacitly to my honour in allowing her to visit me, and that I could do nothing of which I knew he would disapprove so highly as the admitting any gentleman into the room while she was there. When Miss Barker translated this, she was as angry as any spoiled child, turned her back upon me, and kept striking notes on the piano with one finger, as she sat pouting on

the stool. Presently she said something very spitefully, and I asked what it was ; “ Tell her she is jealous,—say that she is afraid of letting me see any of the men.” I verily believe that she thought I had locked them all up. I tried to bring her to reason, and begged Miss Barker to call her attention quietly to the black slave, who was looking furiously angry at hearing her mistress’s request. We took her into the next room, and asked her how, even if it were right to deceive her husband, she could trust the discretion or the fidelity of her slaves ;—she *must* see how the black one was glaring at her ! For all we could say, she replied that she did not care, and that it was very spiteful of me to disappoint her so. At last a compromise was agreed on, provided that the Nubian gave her consent ; and a little coaxing, and no doubt a promise of a bakshish, soon gained that.

It was agreed that the lady and her slaves were to put on their yashmaks and feridjees, to sit in the little room with the door ajar, and that Mr. Rumball should be brought upstairs and placed near enough to them to be distinctly visible. I could not see any harm in this, and therefore gave my consent, provided they kept their promise of remaining veiled. I then went down to Mr. Rumball, and solemnly adjuring him to behave with the utmost discretion and

gravity, brought him before the door of the room, where the lady was seated as if in the best box of an Opera, with her attendants behind her. He was very much amused, and made them all giggle vastly by throwing a handkerchief over his face, and pretending to be shy. However they would not endure this long, and called out to me to pull it off, which I did. I stood by his side, like a showman exhibiting some rare beast; and when I would have led him away, the audience within murmured like children who beg to have another look. But at last I was suffered to let him say adieu, and I drove him away into the garden again, laughing and kissing his hand.

When he was gone, they all said, throwing off their veils, that he was very good-looking, and that they had been very much pleased with the sight of him; they thanked me very much, and hoped I would show them Mr. Mansfield and Mr. Hornby another time,—which of course I promised to do. Then the Cocona sat down to the piano again, and again strummed until my head fairly ached. You may fancy how tired I was, when I tell you that they stayed from ten till four. At last, to my great relief, they put on their veils and feridjees and hurried away, seemingly delighted with their visit, and promising to come again soon!

LETTER XXXI.

BOATMEN'S SONGS.—GREEK SINGING.—SPECIMENS.

Constantinople, September 12th, 1856.

My dear Julia,

LAST year I promised to send you, if possible, some of the boatmen's songs of the Bosphorus. Through the kindness of a friend, who speaks and understands Greek perfectly well, I have at last procured a few of the most popular,—such as are constantly heard in the villages, and before the trellised doors of the caiquéées after sunset. In Constantinople the caiquejee is almost invariably mute and dignified, keeping time with his oars with splendid strength and regularity, neither looking to the right nor the left, except casting a rapid glance now and then to see that the way is clear.

A grand Turk would be horrified at his boatman speaking unless spoken to, except it were necessary in the navigation of the boat. I do not know what he would do if his majestic silence were disturbed by a

song, after the manner of Venetian boatmen. However the silent beauty of the Bosphorus, only broken by the deep and measured plunge of oars in the water, is something peculiarly delightful and dreamy, and you never wish the charm disturbed. Beside which, the Greek notion of singing is peculiarly harsh, inharmonious, and monotonous : it only sounds well, mellowed by great distance ; when one becomes more accustomed to it, it is not unpleasant to be awakened by the chant of the fishermen as they draw in their nets, or by a love-song from some caique darting rapidly down the stream, or moored idly in the shade of a palace-wall. But it is in the evening that you hear this monotonous sound rising from every valley,—from cafanées overhanging the waters of the Bosphorus, to the shady fountain-trees of the villages, under which, in fine weather, the poor almost pass their lives. Sometimes it is accompanied by a little liquid-sounding drum or by a small guitar, and this goes on all the night long, often until after sunrise. There is little or no melody,—in fact, the word *song* scarcely applies to a monotonous and somewhat melancholy chant, which is always in the Minor mode, and frequently approaches recitative.

Remember that I do not send you these scraps as curious specimens ; they are merely rough translations of the ordinary every-day songs of the Greeks

here ; and I fear that “the heroic lay is tuneless now,” for they are but trifles. However, in the original Greek they really sound very sweet and melodious, and, although understanding but little, their smoothness particularly charmed my ear. Of course this is completely lost in the literal translation, as well as their great tenderness.

But here is a village swain, in despair at the departure of his love. He is supposed to be addressing a sympathizing friend, or fellow-sufferer. She is evidently a great beauty and breaker of hearts.

“Didst thou not see the fair one ?
Alas ! I too beheld her yesterday,
When she stepped into a little boat,
And departed for foreign parts.

“The wind blew, and the sea was rough.
The sails filled,
Like the plumes of a little pigeon
When it spreads its wings.

“Her friends stood on the shore,
With mingled grief and joy ;
And she with a handkerchief
Returned their adieux.

“And a sad adieu
I also would have said ;
But the cruel one
Denied me even this.

" I weep not for the boat,
 I weep not for the sails,
 But I weep for the fair one
 Who is gone to foreign parts."

Here is one illustrative of Eastern life :—

" 'Good evening to thee, my lady
 On this high terrace
 What art thou planting and watering,
 That thou turnest not round to behold me ?'

" 'What is it to thee, young man,
 What I am watering and planting ?
 Sweet flowers I plant
 For the youth I love.'

" 'Plant not these flowers, my soul ;
 Lady, plant not these flowers ;
 But plant basilica,
 That their seed the nightingales may see
 And eat, and make sweet melody.' " *

Now comes a lovers' quarrel, in which the gentleman shows a considerable amount of Greek ingenuity.

" If any wicked person, or liar,
 Hath spoken ill of me,
 Yet thou must not forget
 So soon our tender vows.

* I cannot find out what is meant by the nightingales eating the seeds of basilica, which no doubt means basil, held sacred by the Greeks, the true Cross having been found shrouded in its leaves.

"My love! I see thou art grieved,
Very much grieved for me;
Yet I know of no other fault
Than of too much love for thec.

"My fair one! after so many vows,
And cherishing many fond hopes,
How canst thou grieve me, my life?
Ah! it must be *another* you love!"

Is not this little scrap of pretended jealousy and "turning of tables" a masterpiece? This song amused me excessively; it is so smooth and plausible and persuasive in the original. One can so easily imagine the beauty relenting, and raising her large dark eyes, to say—

"And was it really true?" etc.

Songs of this length do not seem to be so popular as those of two, or even one verse. Over and over again, to the same monotonous chant, an idle boatman or a gardener, resting in the sultry heat of the day, seems to take a quiet sort of delight in repeating such lines as these:—

"Three months elapsed before I saw thee,
Ma-ri-à-me-ne! Ma-ri-à-me-ne!
I thought they were three years.
Three sharp knives into my heart did enter,
Ma-ri-à-me-ne! Ma-ri-à-me-ne!"

I can just fancy the splendid young caiquejee in

snowy garments and crimson sash and cap, singing this as he rows gaily along,—

“ As many stars as in the skies,
 As many windows in Stamboul,*
 As many damsels I have kissed
 On the eyebrows, on the eyes.”

Or this—

“ I send thee my love,
 With a rosy apple ;
 And in the rosy part
 A tender kiss is hidden.

“ Let us make our vows
 Under sixty-two columns ;
 And if I do not love thee,
 Let them all fall and crush me !”

This is to a shrinking, sensitive young lady, and is very musical and pretty in the original Greek :—

“ My little white rose !
 My queen of flowers !
 Hast thou discarded love,
 That I may despise it too ?

“ An old man may discard it
 A hundred summers old,
 But can I live without it,
 Who but eighteen have told ?

* Mr. Smythe speaks of the many windows of Stamboul at sunset charming the bewildered fancy of a provincial on his first arrival.

" Maiden mine ! fairest girl !
Thou art trying to cause my death.
But I will not die, I will not die !
My love is so great
That thou ~~must~~ be mine,
Thou must be mine ! "

This is a curious verse :—

" Pale hands which the sun has never seen,
Which the doctors touch,
And say to one another,
'There is no hope of life.' "

The following description of the garden, in the evening, set in order, and fair at the same time, with both fruit and flowers, is really very pretty in the original :—

" One Saturday night
I went out to walk
In a beautiful garden,
Of which all are envious.
It was in blossom,
And decked out fair,
And bright with many fruits."

To the lady walking there :—

" Oh, thou bright sun ! thou golden light !
With thy brilliant rays
Thou hast taken away my sight !
Beside thine mine eyes have grown dim ;

So then let my lips say
That I love you ;
That the leaves of my heart*
May be cured."

But I think you will have had enough of Greek love-songs, and must conclude. Edward Barker has promised me some of a different kind, real Romaic war-songs, about liberty, and all that the Greeks talk of,—independence, love of Greece, etc. Adieu !

* The Greeks liken the heart to a rose with five leaves or petals.

[Two or three of the Letters belonging to the foregoing series not having come to hand, the following, which has been received since Mrs. Hornby's second departure to Constantinople, is inserted.]

LETTER XXXII.

SEVERITY OF WINTER.—LIFE IN A KIOSK.—THE GOLDEN HORN FROZEN OVER.—WOLVES AND FOXES.—THEIR MURDEROUS INCUSIONS.—SCARCITY OF FOOD AND FUEL.—HIGH PRICES.—ENGLISH AND GREEK SERVANTS.—DEATH OF REDSHID PASHA.

Orta-kioy, February 5th, 1858.

My dear Mrs Austin,

A thousand thanks for your kind letter, and for the pretty book. Edith was very much pleased with it, and I often read to her with great pleasure those of the poems which she can most easily understand, about heath-flowers and all that reminds us of dear old Weybridge.

I hear that the weather is mild and pleasant in England. Here we have undergone all the horrors of a most severe winter, in a thin wooden house, perched on the top of a range of hills, perfectly exposed to the north. For the last six weeks the storms have been almost uninterrupted, and the country has been covered with one vast sheet of snow, driven down

with great violence from the Black Sea. Night after night I have lain awake, expecting every moment that the whole side of my room, consisting of *nine* rattling windows, must inevitably be blown in. The stove I had put up was of little use against the piercing draughts of air which poured in from all parts of the room. A candle was often blown out, and the Persian rug literally danced and flapped about on the floor. Snow was often forced into a little drift on my table, in the middle of the room. Now we have nailed up skins and pieces of carpet, which protect us from the blasts on the north side.

Water stood in solid masses of ice in all our rooms last week. This will not surprise you, when I tell you that part of the Golden Horn is frozen over, and that many hundred persons crossed over on foot. Wolves and foxes have come down from the mountains in great numbers, and several persons, including a poor charcoal-burner belonging to a village near us, have been killed by the ferocious attacks of the former. Their tracks have been seen in the snow in the vineyard close to our house, and in the wood opposite; so that even when the weather clears up, I shall be afraid to venture beyond the garden with the children.

Last week, after a snow-storm of three days, the front of our kiosk was entirely walled up in a snow-

drift. Every window of our little drawing-room was completely darkened, and the effect of fire and candle-light inside was most curious, reflected on the white flakes and on the icicles. Our men had to cut their way out of the street-door, and sally forth in quest of a whole sheep; for I was afraid that all supplies might be cut off for some time. The only white bread to be got is made at Bebec, a village on the European side; and, as all communication was cut off, I had to put everybody on rations. My mother and I were so afraid of eating any of the white loaves, that, after the storm was over and the steamer able to get up the Bosphorus with provisions, we had three left.

My husband went to his Court at Pera on Monday morning, and was unable either to come, send, or even hear of us until the Friday following, as neither caique nor steamer could venture to move in the blinding sheet of snow on so dangerous and rapid a stream, with much shipping lying about. I had a most anxious and trying time, with about as wretchedly helpless a set of servants as it is possible for a poor mortal to be plagued with. I got Edmund's tool-box, fastened up refractory doors, put pegs into rattling windows, shamed them into clearing snow away by beginning to do it myself, and, beside taking care of the children day and night, had to be con-

stantly thinking and doing for these ladies and gentlemen.

If we could have got to Pera, we should have done so, but of course this was impossible, and nothing remained but to weather the storm.

Wood and charcoal have been at a frightful price all the winter. In the autumn, the powers that be ordered all the boat-loads of wood, arriving here from all parts of the country, to sell their freights at so much a *cheki*, *filling their own stores of it at that price*. The poor people lost by it, and of course would bring no more; so that this pretended law for the good of the people has caused much suffering.

I keep one good wood fire all day in the dining-room, for the children, and one in the drawing-room, only lighted about four o'clock. During the storm we had come to our last basket, and were already burning our packing-cases,—a dreadful state of suspense to be in! Our boatmen, who sleep in a bathroom a short distance from the house, were shut up and obliged to be dug out. They then pushed their way to a neighbour, and borrowed a small quantity of wood. That night all the sheep of this and many other villages, and hundreds of oxen, were frozen to death, to the utter ruin of many poor families.

In the midst of the howling of the wind, and the constant beating of sharp snow against our windows,

the fire-guns on the hill near us often thundered their alarm,—three or four fires glaring on the snow in one week! This has indeed been a gloomy winter; everything is of course at famine price.

I tell you all this, my dear Mrs. Austin, as you asked to know all about us. I have but little news to tell you, beyond what, no doubt, Julia has recounted of our domestic misfortunes, in not being able to get a house, and in being, so far as I am concerned, tormented, beyond all that you have heard, or could have conceived, by the airs and graces and helplessness of the English servants of “high character” whom we brought here with us. The poor Greeks, so happy with us before, have left in despair and disgust; so that when we go to our new house, we have to get others. At last I think I have conquered the English ones, and that we shall have peace; even without giving Edmund’s groom cold woodcocks for his breakfast, and an unlimited supply of the finest loaf-sugar for his green tea.

My dear children are quite well; my mother is a most cheerful and faithful companion to them. She has thoroughly enjoyed all the difficulties of this terrible winter. I do not believe anything could have pleased her so much; for she has felt how necessary she has been to us all, and how dreary I should have been without her. My husband is very happy

in the satisfactory progress of his new Court: I see but little of him, except at dinner-time. His only holiday has been a shooting-party to a village in Asia Minor,—a most primitive place, where he stayed three or four days, bringing back plenty of game, and part of a deer, for our Christmas dinner.

The death of Redshid Pasha has caused much real regret here. His friends strongly suspect that bronchitis had but little to do with it, but no inquiries were made, and he was buried before we, living in front of his house, had heard of his death.

But I must conclude, dear Mrs. Austin. My letter will, I fear, be but an untidy affair. My drawing-room is filled with smoke from the green wood, and I am obliged to write in the children's room, where they are making a great noise with their father's two spaniels, driven indoors out of their snow-covered houses.

THE END.







